



Class BA125

Book .G7

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS

OF

The Lord's Judgments asserted ;

OR, A CALL TO SUCH

AS LOVE TO FARE SUMPTUOUSLY

EVERY DAY,

&c &c.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF
THE LORD'S JUDGMENTS ASSERTED ;
OR,
A CALL TO SUCH
AS LOVE TO FARE SUMPTUOUSLY
EVERY DAY,

To bring their deeds unto the Light which is come by Jesus Christ ; even to his Light in the Conscience, which would make manifest the things that are highly esteemed among Men, while an abomination in the sight of God :—if haply, there may yet be space to repent of the Sorcery and Fornication which they have committed through Covetousness, which is Idolatry ; by which the Stumbling-block of Iniquity is set up to worship Devils and Idols of gold and silver, and sensual honours and delights ;—of which all People are warned to beware, lest the Dispensations of the Lord, and the time of their visitation slip away, and the woful day overtake them at unawares : but that while they have space they may bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, that so they might discern the Signs of the Times, and that which deeply concerns their own Condition.

A HINT

TO
MERCHANTS, TRADERS AND LAWYERS ;
AND TO SUCH, AS (IN BABEL'S LANGUAGE,) ARE CALLED
THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY ;
BUT ABOVE ALL, TO THOSE CALLED
CLERGY,

If so be, they may be provoked to Jealousy, that even some of them may yet be aroused to look to their Foundation.

ALSO,
AN EARNEST EXPOSTULATION WITH SUCH
AS SPEAK OF EMANCIPATION.

AND
AN APPEAL

TO
THE RULERS OF THESE REALMS :

WRITTEN BY ONE OF THE MEANEST OF THEIR SUBJECTS ;
WHO (THOUGH UNWORTHY TO ESPOUSE SUCH A CAUSE,) IS A HEARTY WELL-WISHER OF THE NATION, AND
THE RULERS THEREOF ;

THOMAS GOOUCH.

WATERFORD :

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BATHING HOUSES

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INTRODUCTION.

WE read of no crime, throughout the Scriptures, which more frequently drew down divine vengeance upon people and nations, than that of forsaking the Lord and going after other gods, whereby they became corrupt and brutish in life and knowledge.

And moreover, we may likewise observe, that the main root and ground of all that idolatry, was selfishness, covetousness, or the love of money, which is called the root of all evil; which still causeth people to err from the true and living faith in God, (as in i. Timothy vi) and so pierceth with many sorrows, and raiseth a gulf of darkness, like as John describes, (signifying things which should then shortly come to pass,) he saw the smoke rise out of the pit, which darkeneth both the sun and air; (see Rev. ix.) and hath not the pit been opened, by such as are highly esteemed of men, yea, even esteemed as bright luminaries, or stars of the first order?

And may it not now be queried, whether there ever was any age of the world, wherein idolatry did more rage than at the present time? or is there any nation wherein it more abounds than our own? seeing (as the Scripture saith,) that covetousness is idolatry, and the love of money is the root of all

evil; and that appears all along, to have been a main cause of the vanities into which the people fall away in the time of the law and the prophets, even unto the gospel times, yea, so largely set forth and the subject so dwell upon throughout the Scriptures, that to advert to texts of that import, might seem like taking from the weight of that which is set forth throughout the whole; but when I recite a particular passage, I only mean to say—see how like these are to the Scriptures throughout.

How marvellously clear, doth Moses point out and foretell of their revoltings, and consequent judgments, as we may read in Deut. xxxii. &c. which appear so applicable to our state, even to the present day, that I shall quote a few lines, in order to refer to the whole.

Speaking in the name of the Lord, he saith; “they have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, &c I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them” (Deut xxxii. 21. 23)

And the prophets lament the like revoltings and evils, which are written for our warning.

Jeremiah likens the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman; even at the time when he saith, that from the least of them unto the greatest every one is given to covetousness; and from

the prophet even to the priest every one dealeth falsely ; and so they healed the hurt of the people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace ; and were not ashamed when they committed abomination, neither could they blush ; therefore,” (he saith) “ they shall fall among them that fall ; at the time that I shall visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.” (See Jeremiah vi)

And in Chap ii saith, “ why tirmmest thou thy way to seek love ? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways : also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents : I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these ; yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me ; behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.” (Jer. ii. 33 34 35.)

And such appears to have been the state, in which the Redeemer found them, when he came, for the bringing in of the better hope even the hope of the glorious and free Gospel ; who for our sake also, condescended to reason with them, that we likewise should be instructed, even by many such sayings as these :

“ He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much ; if therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches ? and if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own ?

No servant can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other ; ye cannot serve God and Mammon. And the Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things ; and they derided him. And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts ; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."
 (Luke xvi. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.)

PREFACE.

*Some serious Reflections, by way of Preface ;
with a short allusion to those called the Nobility
and Gentry : and other Remarks (touching the
Signs of the Times,) of too general tendency
to be brought into the following Sections.*

THESE Reflections are not the result of rash, hasty imagination, or speculative notions, neither have the contending interests, or jarring sentiments which hath appeared in the world, been any inducement to me, thus to come forth as a fool, in their view, who may be prudent in their own sight ; nay, but these remarks may rather be accounted as the mere gleanings, or fragments, of some mournful cogitations and forebodings of that harvest which may be fast ripening. And though this be but as the residue of a shaken tree, or like unto a few berries of the uttermost

branches, even as the forebodings of that harvest which may yet be as a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow, because the people know not the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hand. And seeing that they can calculate the ages of the world, and the regions thereof, even above and beneath, how is it then, that they know not the Lord, (the maker of all things,) neither consider the operation of his hand? is it not because they will not know nor consider? therefore they see not, neither can they hear, even because they would not see nor hear.

“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,” is a solemn admonition often repeated in Scripture; yea, and even where the words are not literally alike, the warning appears to be equally strong and pointed; whether it speaks of hearing, seeing, feeling or understanding: it is remarkable in what divers manners of speech the same thing is set before us; as if in order that we should be reasoned with, in all manner of ways the most awakening, to arouse mankind from a state of spiritual lethargy, yea even if so be, that some should be more likely to be attracted by one manner of speech, and others by something different; yet but one uniform language, to

awake and call upon God, with the unfailing promise annexed, that Christ would give them light; insomuch, that if such as did not hear Moses and the Prophets would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead, how should we escape, if we make light of the sayings also, of Christ and his Apostles?

And now, all ye who profess faith in Christ, (if ye reverence his sayings) take notice how severely the Lord upbraided the people (among whom he walked), because they could not discern the signs of the times, whereby it is evident, that they should have known if it had not been their own fault, seeing that he is no hard master, nor ever required impossibilities; but he reasoned with them (by which also he reasoneth with us) to shew, that they had ample faculties for to see, hear, and understand, and he also sheweth the cause why they could not use their faculties; and that is, because they would not, we may therefore see, that his light, and grace, and truth, hath appeared to all, though such as reject him, receive his grace in vain, in whom the light becomes darkness; and now, let us awfully remember the cause which the Lord sheweth, why they could not see; oh! if ye regard his sayings, mark well what

he saith, even that it is not because they had no eyes, but because they had two eyes, and one blinded the other, because the eye was not single, for “if thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.” (*Matthew*, vi. 22, 23—*Luke*, xi. 34.) Behold, oh! ye unbelievers in the light, the cause of your unbelief, even that ye cannot believe or see, because ye have two eyes, or an evil eye, even when the Lord, by his light or conviction in the conscience shews what is good, and reproves the evil, then there is not a taking heed thereunto in such as do evil; because they hate the light, who hate its reproofs and terrors for sin, and would not part with those things which are reprovèd and made manifest by the light,—but have another eye, that looks out, to save the lusts and inclinations of the flesh, and the corruption thereof, from the death blow which the Lord would bring upon them; and that is the evil eye, which fills the whole body with darkness; and that is the eye also, which looks out after the glory of this world, and minds what others say, and have said, and done, that they may follow their example; but would not follow the Lord, nor trust him, because he would spare no lust; such would rather learn of men,

who would teach them to save that which their soul lusteth after, even that wisdom and friendship, which they take to be the high road to the honours and profits of this world, or whatever beloved object lies nearest to the heart, whether within or without; if Satan can but draw out the mind to look at and follow it, instead of looking to the Lord, that is the evil eye, which so looks out to man rather than God, whereby the whole body becomes full of darkness.

So it is with all the sons and daughters of Adam in the fall; since the day wherein the tempter was hearkened unto, and that eye opened in Adam and Eve, which looked upon the tree of knowledge, and saw it pleasant to the eyes, a tree of desire to make one wise, and hearkened to the tempter, (who said they should be as Gods,) and so let in an aspiring mind, which destroyed all their felicity; but how happy were they, while they had an ear, only to hear and obey what the Lord had commanded them; but when there was an ear opened to hear contrary to his commandment, and an eye to see what the Lord never shewed them, nor desired them to look after, behold what death and darkness was the effect thereof; alas! how was the ear, the eye, and altogether thrown

out of order, beyond the reach of any comparison, inasmuch that death came upon them even while alive in the body ; and the Lord's voice, (which they had heard with delight,) now became a terror ; and that eye, which before could see nothing but harmony and innocence, became blinded with guilt and shame ; and that understanding which had named the creatures which the Lord had made, became so deranged, as to think of hiding, (in the garden,) from the Lord who is omnipresent.

And wonderful as all that should now appear, it is so exactly the state of all the sons and daughters of Adam in the fall, that no language could more strikingly set forth the condition of such as hearken to the tempter at this day, and who also hear and follow the voice of such as are beguiled by the subtilty of the serpent ; the Lord's voice is a terror to all that hate the light, and that is the condemnation of all that love darkness rather than the light ; such would hear and obey, (yea and trust) man rather than the Lord ; they that hate the light, would hide from God, (who is light,) as Adam did, and that is the state of all his sons and daughters in the fall, and will remain so for ever, with every soul that

would not come to Christ the Redeemer, out of the fall, who is the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in,

And when he came into the world in that prepared body, to redeem mankind, and restore the joys of God's salvation to the ends of the earth, we may observe, that many, who were highly esteemed amongst men, and thought most eminent for wisdom, learning and piety, were the most severely upbraided by our Saviour, as men who could not discern the signs of the times; yea, they were called such as had eyes that could not see, ears that could not hear, and hearts which could not understand, and even such of the chief rulers as believed on him, did not confess him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, for the world by wisdom knew him not, nay, but their chief rulers and scribes, (who were esteemed as the centre and fountain of light and understanding,) were the furthest off from having that eye opened, which could see the things that belonged to their peace, and they were the men, who, with their subtilty, craft, and covetousness, tended most wofully to darken the minds of the people, and settle them down secure in the way which leads to destruction, as

we may read in *Matthew*, xxiii. *Mark*, xii. *Luke*, xx. *John*, ix. and many other parts of Scripture ; and that which hardened the heart and darkened the understanding in that day, will never enlighten it in any age of the world.

Yet now alas, how many who read those sayings, pass them over, as if they should not be applicable to their own state, and as if they were only recorded as a declaration of what took place in that day ; but are they not also written for our instruction, correction, and admonition, that so we may be warned (by that which befell the Jews) to beware of rejecting the Saviour as they did, whereby they were left in a state of death, darkness, and self-righteousness ? and now, all sorts of people are equally warned thereby, let their profession be what it may, whether of the national way of religion, or the most zealous dissenter, or whatever else, whether professor or profane, or however circumstanced in the world, high or low, rich or poor, all of us together may do well to take notice, how many sorts, ways, and opinions, were among the Jews, which (however widely they differed one from another) were all professing to look for the Messiah, and yet, how wofully did they (or most of them) reject him when he ap-

peared? because they were carnally minded, and not spiritual, but, looking out for something suitable to man's wisdom, by which each was built up in their own way; insomuch, that (how far soever they differed from each other) some of all sorts seemed agreed in rejecting the Saviour; but most of all, their great and wise ones, who could not bear the purity, simplicity, and spirituality of his life and doctrine; which being so contrary to their wisdom, and to their carnal selfish views, that they were filled with madness, insomuch, that some of the most moderate amongst them would say, these are hard sayings who can bear them? others said he hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him?

And now, is there not as great danger at this day, that many who make a high profession, and speak highly of his coming and mediation, (yea, and of the redemption which comes by Christ,) yet may withstand the glorious design thereof, as stiff as ever the Jews did, who were the betrayers and murderers of the Prince of Life? Alas, what shall be said of high professing Christians, who go about to establish their own righteousness; settling down in their different forms of religion, and as zealous for the ceremonies thereof, as ever

the Jews were, while as yet, they may be equally from beneath, as the Jews in their ceremonies, yea, and with less command for their observance of them than the Jews, who were commanded to observe the figures of the ceremonial law in its season, until Christ came; and will not the mere formal christian be far more inexcusable than the Jew, if so be, that after all their profession of the Lord from Heaven, (the quickening spirit,) they should yet sit down in that which is from beneath, even the works of the flesh? not submitting to his righteousness which is of faith, and so not believing in his heavenly promise of his law written in the heart, even the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which should change the heart, and make all things new, and all of God, in righteousness and true holiness, even as by making the inside clean, the outside should be clean also, yea, all the life and conduct of the true Christian should be of a piece, like the example left us by the Lord, that we should follow his steps, as Peter saith, (1 *Peter*, ii. 21,) and if we should follow his steps in suffering, how could we do otherwise in conduct through life; yet now, after all, if we say (or think) as the Jews did, who said, these are hard sayings, who can hear it, and

in like manner thrust his good spirit and ways far from us, and so go out from his spirit and council, and settle down in a form of godliness, without the power ; such go from the religion of Jesus, let the form be what it may.

The Scripture chargeth us to turn away from such as go away from the power of God ; (2 *Timothy*, iii. 5.) and saith, that such as had the form of godliness, yet were proud and covetous, yea, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, but Christ, the power of God, redeems out of all iniquity, so we may see, that the religion of Jesus is neither more nor less than his own spirit and power made manifest in the soul ; and John saith, all who deny that were of Antichrist, so that the fairest, and most specious profession of Christ that ever yet appeared, without his spirit, is at best but a bastard, brought forth by the great mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and that is the birth which at this day corrupteth the earth, and fills it with violence, yea, with the violence which is done to the convictions of the Prince of Life, by such as profess him, while their life and conduct say, away with such a one from the earth, and release unto us the robber, yea even that which hath robbed and spoiled the earth, and

filled it with violence, (who can read this ?) that which is of the earth, earthy, would rather bear, and be more at liberty with the robber, even though they should have tasted of the spoil, confusion, and insurrection which he had made since the days of Adam, yet he being of their own nature and spirit, they could bear with him rather than Christ, who is not of this world, and whose spirit all crucify unto themselves, who live after the flesh, even while they may shew great zeal, and make a specious profession of the gospel, and would be much offended to be called unbelievers.

And after all that hath been done for the nations called Christendom, who profess that blessed faith of which the Jews proved themselves unworthy through their unbelief, yet if we who profess that precious faith, should fall into the like desperate depravity, with which they were upbraided, as the cause, not only of their woful calamities, but also the cause, why they could not read or understand even the judgments of the Lord denounced against themselves ; and thus the Scripture setteth forth the cause, saying, “ wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me,

and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men :—therefore, behold, I will proceed,” &c. (*Isaiah* xxix. 13.) and although that was addressed to the people of Israel, yet it stands as a warning to the ages of the world, and now after all that the Lord hath done for us, if we should forsake him, and go after other gods as they did, should we not be more guilty and far less excusable than the Jews, against whom the anger of the Lord waxed hot, and his fierce wrath was often poured forth upon them for serving other gods ; whereby the heart became dark and gross, and their manners corrupted, until at last they were destroyed from being a gathered people : and we who have had a gracious offer of the precious faith (which they lost), and have even been partakers of a foretaste of many blessed effects, which should be the portion of the true believer, even as it respects the life that now is, with many precious demonstrations of the blessed fruition thereof, in that which is to come.

Such is the foretaste which hath been set forth before the Christian world by a cloud of witnesses through the long forbearance of God, which hath not been for our own righteousness, but according to the greatness of his mercy ; and if (after all,)

we should follow lying vanities, and forsake that sure mercy, by going after other gods as the Jews did, though quite in a different way; yet if the heart be removed from the Lord, there lieth the whole evil, yea, the evil nature is then put on, and the divine nature departed from; for no good thing can proceed out of the heart which departeth from the Lord, and he is not as a man that could be mocked with empty lying compliments of lip honour, or other performance, while the heart is far from him, serving other gods, for whatsoever the heart of man goes after, that is his god, and if it be an earthly corruptible object, that will corrupt and darken the mind and manners of such as cleave thereunto; and that is the root and ground of idolatry, which corrupteth the earth.

Therefore if the heart go from the fear and law of the Lord written therein, and so become dark, gross, and earthly, going after covetousness and the vanities of the world, which were the vanities of the heathen that knew no God; would it not then be just and righteous with the Lord, the Judge of all the earth, who will do right, and hath shewn long forbearance, which if we slight, and will not turn to him that smiteth (or chasten-

eth in mercy,) would it not then be just and righteous with him, for to deal with us, in righteous judgment, and fury poured forth, seeing that it is his unalterable purpose, to erect a standard of righteousness in the nations? hath he not a right to rule, break, and dash to pieces, (all that will not be fashioned conformable to his will,) until he comes to rule, whose right it is? and if that should appear to us, to be effected in (comparative) slow degrees, should not his forbearance and long suffering lead us to repentance, even so as thoroughly to amend our ways, and our doings, rather than to stout it out, until the overflowing scourge pass over, when there should be no remedy? Who knows but the Lord may yet hasten his work, and cut it short in righteousness, in a manner which we have not yet witnessed; and such are the considerations which I feebly aim at bringing into view, by the following plain simple reflections.

And now if I can do nothing for the truth, I should be sorry indeed to do any thing against it; and as I desire, that none who read (the following pages,) should hurt themselves, (by indulging impressions resulting from the lightness of a vain mind;) I would earnestly and affectionately

remind some, of a caution which they may read in Scripture, that is, “therefore be not ye mockers, lest your bands be made strong;” and although many may be disposed to deride what they read herein, and view it with contempt and ridicule; yet I am persuaded, that whoever thou art, that may read this little book, (strange or awkward as it should appear) thou may find something therein to suit thy own condition, whatever may be thy state or situation, or however circumstanced in life; and I myself, if I should live to see it at a future day, desire to be preserved in such a state of mind, as to be instructed by remarks that may be found therein.

Nevertheless, I am quite aware, that there are many things about it, (beside what may be thought of the singularity of the subject,) which will appear to the self-righteous critic, exceeding rude, and unfit for to appear in an age and nation so polished, refined, and reformed as those in which we now live; but all that and much more that might be said of the like kind, have little or no weight with me, though I would not (willingly) offend any, yet, as offences will come, I would remind such as may be offended, to remember, that it cometh by such as cause the offence, rather than by him that pointeth out the cause; and

here it seems as well for me, slightly to hint at a few of the most prominent objections, that may occur to many, or most readers, who may be strongly prejudiced against what is herein set forth.

And first, I know that some would object, that many things like what is held forth herein, hath been already advanced by evil-minded men, whose designs therein were mischievous ; to which I would answer, that I am satisfied in my own conscience, which I trust will bear me witness, that I dare not join in any wise with those whose designs were evil, let their pretensions be what they may ; and if such should seem to make a handle of some evils which I may point out, yet their being taken notice of by evil-minded men, may not be a sufficient cause for me to pass them by, though I never chose to go their way ; and now, if mischievous, evil minded men, should say what we know to be true, and should complain of abuses and of evil ways, would that be a reason why they should not be believed ? or that they who commit such things, should still persist therein, because ill-disposed men pointed at them ? would not that be sinning with a high hand indeed ? If I should fall into the mire, and should my

adversary meet me and make sport of my filthy condition, would that be a reason for me to tumble into it again? or that my friends should not help me or take notice of my situation? and because my enemy watched after me for evil, is that a reason why my friend should not look towards me for good? Albeit I am aware, that a desperate disease may sometimes be followed by desperate consequences: and is it not high time to look about, when the sword of the wicked seems drawn against the iniquity of a nation, seeing that righteous men would not be fit to execute the Lord's vengeance upon a guilty people?

* And now, as the length and tediousness of the whole may appear objectionable to most readers, especially at this day, when the world seems bur-

* As to that common objection, that the repetition of the same words is tiresome and takes away from the weight;

I would answer, that such a conclusion may be erroneous, if resting only with the hearer or the reader, who (peradventure) could feel little or no weight in the most solemn subject, if only once repeated, or never mentioned at all; and then, if such should be repeatedly called upon, to attend to things in which they felt no interest, (though of the deepest concernment to themselves;) it is no marvel if such should think a repetition both insipid and tiresome, while the soul cleaveth unto the dust of the earth, settling

thened with publications : I may say, that is far from being my choice ; for I aimed at brevity throughout as much as I was capable ; and could easier

down in that fearful state, which saith, “ yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep ;” (*Proverbs*, xxiv.)

I shall repeat some cases over and over again, because that I have often thought it a marvellous thing, that many, (who are very tenacious about non-essentials,) least of all mind that which is of the greatest magnitnde ; and thus, if any say, wherefore should he so often repeat our Saviour’s manner of reasoning with the Jews ? I might say to such a one, that I repeat it over and over again, because thou seem to forget, that it is an unspeakably important part of the New Testament, which deeply concerns all sorts of people.

We may frequently perceive, both in the Old and New Testament, the same words repeated, in order to call the attention to the solemnity of the subject.—Jeremiah, in his epistle to the captive Jews, (to shew, that the gods of the nations are no gods,) mentions their gods thirty times in that one chapter ; and what if it might be proved, even at this day, that the gods of many who call themselves Christians, are no gods.

But I need not attempt any thing by way of apology, well knowing, that after all that I should say, I could never satisfy some ; seeing that such as resolve to put off real seriousness until the day of doom, would be sure to throw aside these Reflections, as appearing tedious and tiresome ; while at the same time, if they met with some trifling lying tales, they might spend hours over such things, without thinking them tedious or tiresome !!

have made it a deal longer, but as I desire to be fully understood, I could not set forth my views clear and explicit in few words, as others might do, seeing that my comprehension and memory is dull and feeble ; and it may easily be seen, that I am quite what is called illiterate, and although I would by no means slight or undervalue learning in its place, yet I do not hereby mean to apologize for my defect therein ; as I know beyond a shadow of doubt, (having seen, as plain as I see the paper I write upon,) that if I had been faithful to the Lord, he would enable me to express myself as I ought to speak. And although it may be called very rude, and the style appear exceeding low and mean, yea, and what would be called base and foolish ; yet I have no uneasiness on that account, as I should not expect to speed one whit the better, if it had even been according to the refined eloquence of the times, having abundant proof, that if fine shining talents, great learning, arts, or parts, would have done, the work might have been effected long ago, seeing what abundance of such accomplishments run over the nation as a mighty stream ; and although the deceit of old Satan may swim therein like a gallant ship, yet how little real virtue or sincerity, hath been promoted thereby ?

And how is the great name and power of God blasphemed, by attributing the heavenly order and economy which he exerciseth in the creation, (or ordereth by the word of his power) unto the delusive refinement which they affect to be working in the world ; and even imagine, that only for them, things might go back again into the old, rude, barbarous state, from whence many of them think, that such as they, have rescued the whole human race ; even while some of themselves may be sunk as low, and have as great need to be reclaimed as the rudest part of the creation, yet far be it from me to make light of that useful knowledge or learning which hath been one of the smallest of the gifts and favours bestowed upon mankind ; howbeit, those that pervert such favours, while they boast of the perfection of their attainments, seem as destitute of the grand of true knowledge, (even the knowledge of God,) as the most uncivilized part of his creation, which the vanities they run into bear abundant witness, and which would be too tedious for me to point out, as that would be more fit for a volume than a Preface.

Yet I shall make one remark upon the course of their conduct, as I have heard or read, of

their theatres, revels, games and toasts, though I never saw the like; yet the accounts which I have heard of such follies, and the bundles of lying novel and romance books, which are said to be the pastime of what is called the gay and refined world, altogether appear to be so frothy and disgusting, even to a moral rational creature, that we may query, whether there be any thing so low and debasing in the manners of the barbarous nations of the world; yea, whether the accounts we have of the poor Hottentots, and other barbarians, dancing before the moon, or round their fires, (and the like,) be at all so debasing or degrading to the rational creation of God, as the vanities of that which is called the refined world, or higher circles of life: as for instance, what could be compared to that low filthy glee, which is excited by the drinking of their toasts, &c. for my own part, when I have accidentally heard such accounts read, I have been so amazed as to think, what it could be, that should sink, and debase the passions, and exultations of mankind, so far below that of any four-footed beast, or creeping thing upon the face of the whole earth; and yet one day they shall be made to know, *that it is sin.*

But I should not have noticed these things here, if there had been no striking difference between their vanities, and the follies of the rude barbarian, I say, had they been all, only frothy bubble alike, I might have passed them by; but there is one difference, too striking to be passed over unnoticed, and that is, the great profligacy and prodigality of the amusements of the great ones, who seem to think it an honour, to waste and destroy the good things of the creation upon their fickle whimsies and idle fancies; Alas, what a vast heap of deceit, dissimulation, painstaking, curious tricks and invention, must be combined together, to please their crazy passions, which perhaps did not please them in the end, as if Satan was the mainspring and life of all their pursuits, they seem as if they could not sin greedily enough to please him, or come up to that pitch of deceit as would be to his liking; yea, to that pitch of folly is the world arrived (as if it should grow worse with age;) that now they are counted the chief, and most honourable, who destroy the most upon their ungodly lusts; oh! what a brave family they are thought to be, that destroy their thousands a year upon their gambling and rounds of pleasure; which should rather be called rounds of madness.

And if so happen, as often we hear, that they run into great debts, by such follies or madness ; oh ! then the polite and gentile world would talk, as if they were all Satan's host that had been lookers on ; for when they see them run great debts, they speak of such a case, as if they were not accountable beings, and as if there was nothing more at stake, but just the earth that [themselves had lost ; yea, as if they had made themselves, and all that they possessed, and might hurl it about as they please ; even as though they were not stewards that should be accountable to God, for wasting their time, and destroying his good creatures ; but their friends (as they are called) would then say, that they had only to arrange their affairs so and so, until they retrieve their fortune, as if that was all they had to do ; they speak of such things, as if they had quite forgot the great score of sin, that such ways heap to them against the day of wrath ; yea, they speak of such things, as if they had quite forgot, that there is a just and righteous God, to call them to account for trampling upon his favours, and doing violence to that reverence which is due unto him. And yet, such are called the nobility and gentry of a reformed christian state ; but I may not go

into particulars, but must leave them and pass on, for even the slightest view of such things, reminds me of the bottomless pit ; and when we reflect how their ministers build them up in false security so long as they put into their mouths, it seems as if nothing else could reach such a state, but the judgments of Almighty God, which, who would say, but sooner or later they are sure to overtake all such ways.

But to return to the subject of the following lines, I may say, that I have no view of entering into many subjects, nor yet of arguing cases, but slightly to touch upon, and barely bring into view, a few of those things which spread darkness over the nations, and gross darkness in the people, yet I know that it would avail nothing, even were I capable of saying ever so much about it ; yea, and though it should be never so much to the purpose, unless the people lay to heart, and search for themselves to see whether these things are so ; for all that I mean or can do, is, simply to remind us of the great cause there is (at this day,) for self-examination ; and such as may be disposed to find great fault with these remarks, I would only remind them, seriously to consider, whether their own life and conduct be more correct than

what I have written ; and as the main subject which I aim at bringing into view, is that of the evil of covetousness, and shall mention some particular orders of men, as the principal teachers of the people, and leading men of the nation, whose example may be of woful consequence to the people at large, and if any should think that I speak too close and pointed, I may tell them again, that it is quite the reverse, knowing that I have dealt gently as I could, with any degree of justice to the magnitude of the occasion ; and that I have no evil motive, my conscience will bear me witness, as I have no narrowness to any, and nothing but good will to all ; neither have I any thing like what is called a party object in view herein, having even avoided conversing on these subjects while writing, lest that should interfere with the impressions on my own mind, so that no individual even knew of my intention to write these remarks, therefore no one beside myself, is accountable for one line of it.

On viewing these lines, some might be ready to query, (seeing that I speak so pointedly to others,) whether I myself, or the people which I am joined with in religious profession, are clear of covetousness ? to which I would answer, that if

we are not (while I lament that all are not clear) I say that our profession will be no shelter for us, but rather an aggravation of the crime, if so be that while we make a good profession, we should be found guilty of covetousness, either in going too greedily after the gain or friendship of this world, or of sitting down in sloth, and, like the sluggard, covet to be supported by the labour of others ; I say, if such should be the case with any of us, these lines would rather tend to the reproof, than justification of such ways ; yea, and if I, myself, should fall (any ways) into the things which I have condemned, then let what I have written, stand as a testimony against me in such a case, that the ways of the Lord our God may be justified for ever, and cleared from the reproach of all that bring condemnation on themselves.

If any should query, who is this, that appears so bold and confident, as to attack the follies of the times, and speak so freely of the failings of the people ? who is he that takes so much upon him ? Answer, I may tell thee who ; it is even as a worm, one of the meanest of the creation, or rather, what if I should say, that it is the voice of the times which so speak ; and that I am as nothing. There was a time

when great folks would not speak, because they loved the praise of men, and then children spake ; but the great ones were sore displeased, and they also said, rebuke thy disciples ; but the Lord said, that if they held their peace, the stones would cry out ; but how few are they at this day who believe that ; for the unbelief which appeared when the Lord walked amongst men was not much greater than that which is manifest at this day, wherein such as profess most faith, appear the deepest sunk in unbelief, as not only to deride, but disbelieve, that the Lord would cause the things which are trodden under foot, to speak, for the honour and praise of the living and true God, and against the house of Baal, yea, to publish the name of the Lord, and ascribe greatness unto our God.

But as I would not willingly cause any to be mistaken about me, I may acknowledge that my discouragements are great many ways, even to dismay ; and first on my own account, seeing how unfit I am to advocate such a cause, for what will it avail, though I may say, that I have been kept from all things which men call immoral from early youth ; yea, even through a degree of principle ; yet what should that prove more than the Pharisee, when I must acknow-

ledge my unfaithfulness to the Lord, who hath shewn great mercy, and favoured with his light and grace, when in a very low estate; but I have not been faithful in proportion to the great and unmerited mercies of the Lord my God; therefore I must acknowledge the great sin of omission which lieth at my own door, whereby I have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; and seeing that it is even so with me, is it any marvel if I should often be encompassed about with great dismay, when I think of calling to others to look what they are about? and surely my own unworthiness should cause me to look on their failings with all forbearance; but yet, would that be reason for me, now to add this above all the rest, even to prove unfaithful in the end, because I had not been as faithful throughout as I should have been.

And although the discouragements on my own account may be very great, yet how much greater do they appear, (and still more insurmountable) when I look on the other side, and think of the very ill reception that such remarks may be sure to meet with in the world, on many accounts, especially at this day, when the house of Baal has gotten into such high request, and the priests

thereof very many, and their graves and high-places in great repute among divers sorts of people; while they appear but very few, who seem disposed to retire to the caves mouth, being truly zealous for the honour of the Lord alone; for most appear to seek their own things, rather than the things which are Jesus Christ's; yea, they seek the different objects of their attachments; which though they may seem widely to differ one from another, yet they may be found to be quite the same at heart, and tend to the very same end, yea, to be all comprehended in the same region or circle, if they should be found more concerned about their own things, (cause or party) than for piety towards God, and good will to men, yea, and while many think they are for peace on earth and good will to all men, they would not hurt their feelings, (as Babel's phrase is) by calling in question their gods.

For now a days, the gods that many bow down unto, is self-interest, in some way or other, yea, even while they profess self-denial, and such as bow down to self-interest, whether it be in (what is called) religious or in worldly respects, they are very subtle and tenacious of their gods; so that now they are all for peace, because they

would not have the hope of their gain, or their favourite object disquieted or called in question, or run the hazard of having their goddess brought into disrepute, and therein they have a fellow feeling for each other, so that they will not meddle with each other's religion, lest it should disturb their peace, but the truth is, lest it should hurt their self interest, or favourite object, even while each think, that all his care and tenderness is for the truth, even while it may be possible that the truth is not in them; for there is no bounds to the deceit of the heart, yea, the Scripture saith, that it is deceitful above all things, which perhaps was seldom (if ever) more largely verified than in the present day, wherein all seem disposed to cry peace, peace, and for each to pretend to have no dislike to his neighbour's god, even while he esteem it vastly different from his own; as if all should be quite pleasing to the Lord Almighty, while the different self-interests of men, and their self ends should all remain at peace and self-security, all which, seems to be the greatest master-stroke that ever Satan yet played, for the setting up and establishing his kingdom, even outstripping all the persecution and murder that ever he devised, or had

power to practice at any one time, wherein he appeared in the world as a devil, a dragon, and a destroyer and murderer.

But the serpent finding himself foiled in all such hideous shapes; the Lord having limited his power in that sort, and even mankind is turned to abhor him in all such ways, for the faithfulness of the Lord's servants foiled him in battle that way, in which case we may say, that though one woe is past, yet it would be well if a worse did not remain to follow after; for Satan finding himself cast down as a destroyer and murderer, (though still most agreeable to his nature) he again betakes himself to act his first and great master-piece, which is the very groundwork of all that ever he did since the world began, that is, to deceive the nations, even while he cannot torment; so that now he acts as Satan, a serpent, a deceiver, yea, and the Scripture saith, that if Satan be transformed as an angel of light, it is no marvel that his ministers should be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.

And if such should be as the order of the present day, is it possible that any thing could be more alarming in the signs of the times, if we could but understand? for, is there any thing more

dangerous than a false peace, which must be broken up? such a peace as the son of Ahab sent to enquire after, even when the sword was drawn against him, he cried, is it peace? when he that had been sent to execute the Lord's righteous vengeance answered, what peace, while the whoredoms, &c. of thy mother Jezebel are so many? yea, and Jezebel spoke out her last words in a sort of confidence, saying, "Had Zimri peace who slew his master?" And we read, that Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends, and at peace, when our Saviour was taken to be crucified; and now, is there any thing that could tend more wofully to corrupt the earth, and fill it with violence, than such a peace? against which, Christ, the prince of peace, hath a controversy; who "came, not to give peace on earth, but rather division;" (*Luke xii. 51*) who hath ears, let them hear; for he that is the truth, will divide, break in pieces, yea, grind to powder, all deceitful peace, before he gives his peace, which he giveth, who saith, "but not as the world giveth give I;" of whose peace there is no end, but a woful end awaits all the false peace of the world.

Therefore, seeing that the order and disposition

of most in the present day seems tending to say, peace, peace, even to many things against which the just Lord hath an irreconcilable controversy ; is not such an exceeding gloomy aspect in the signs of the times ? even to behold men crying peace and safety, in the very thing, because of which, destruction may be hastening ; yea, because of the deceit wherewith Satan deceiveth the nations ; for was ever greater deceit in the world, than for men to say and think, that they are for the glory of God, and for peace on earth, and good will to men, even while they would not speak the truth to their neighbour, lest it should hurt their feelings, or disturb their peace or false rest, by calling in question, the safety, virtue, or power of their gods ? which may lie so near their self-wills, desires and interest, as to be like dividing asunder between the marrow and the bone to part with it ; for if the carnal mind be set upon any beloved object, it would part with much rather than that thing, which may be called the god of such ; for whatsoever we love most is our god (or idol,) and the great, everlasting, Almighty God that sitteth in the heavens, will not be mocked with an empty, dead, formal profession ; if any man love the things of this world,

or any profession of religion, or any thing connected therewith, more than he loves righteousness, let not such a one deceive himself by saying that the Lord is his God, or that he loves him above all, while in such a state. How admirably clear and simple is the Scripture description of the Lord unto man, which saith, "this is his name, whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness. And again, where the Lord speaks of his own people, which he redeems out of all deceit and unrighteousness, of them he saith, that "their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

But now, what sad forebodings of the signs of the times, is raised in the mind that can perceive the depths of old Satan's bait, which appears to have been sucked in so greedily, as to blind the eye, which could alone behold the glorious innocency in the Creator and preserver of men; (even in the new creation) and to open that eye, that should not only be offended at each other's nakedness, but set to work to sew their fig-leaves together for a covering, and, as if they could make peace between the seed of the serpent and of the woman, even while the Lord hath put enmity between their seed, (mark that) for now man cries, "we must all unite together

and be at peace, and not disturb each other's repose," (though it should be all of the serpent, what is that to me) for now we must be at peace with all men, yea, "peace on earth and good will to men," the ministers of Satan (transformed as the ministers of Christ) may preach, when they would not have their self-ends or interest disturbed, or their deceit exposed to any further attacks that the truth might make upon them; was ever the depths of deceit greater than in this thing? even to be so deluded by the deceivableness of unrighteousness, as to believe a lie, yea, to believe, that they were for peace on earth and good will to men, while they would not disturb any of their idols which bringeth the wrath of God upon them.

Alas, what sort of peace and good will to men is that? could any thing be more like unto a man who might see his neighbour fast asleep in one end of his house, and the other end all on fire? and exclaim, "what a fine happy repose he takes, let him take his rest, for I am all for peace, and have such good will to men, that I could not find in my heart to disturb him, seeing that I love him as myself? and besides that, if I should arouse him up, to be a witness of such

a frightful catastrophe as to see the flames all about his ears, how could I ever after look him in the face? or would he ever forgive me such an act of cruelty? and as this is a time of good will to all men; I would not be guilty of arousing him into such perplexity, hoping that he would not be sensible of the violence of the flames, seeing that he is in such a fine sound sleep; and therefore I may be good enough to let him sleep it out; And moreover, I would account it bordering hard upon persecution, for any to attempt to disturb such happy repose, seeing that for any thing we know, he may now be in great glory, dreaming of high preferment, yea, of the great pomp and state, even of the glory of this world, such as his soul lusteth after."

Now there is a clear and real comparison, of the manner wherein Satan (through his emissaries) is working at this day, to befool, betray, and bewitch mankind; even under pretence of peace with all men, that now they would be so peaceable and condescending, as not to insist upon any thing; but even the condition upon which alone peace can be secured, would be given up for peace sake, (as the serpent's peace is called,) so that, although we find a mighty important con-

dition annexed to the charge of, "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord;" yet we find that Satan's ministers, (or such as would uphold his kingdom of deceit) pretend great liberality; for now they want people to be liberal with them, therefore they would not be too nice, but give up a deal for peace sake, and would not be so rigid as to insist upon holiness, although the Scripture saith, without it none shall see the Lord; but Satan's peace wants no such condition as holiness, unless any should seem to require it, and then for peace sake, he would soon devise a counterfeit holiness, that might pass with all such as he could bewitch for money, for with such, all his sorceries pass for sterling, yea, they have been even called ordinances of God by such whose mind is blinded by the god of this world, which, although their hearts became so dark, that some denied what others set up, yea, and got so fierce about their ordinances, as to cause many to be cast into prison, tormented and killed, who attempted to deny those things, about which they were never agreed among themselves, further than as the higher powers extorted a deceitful compliance.

Such was the work which the devil drove in the world for some ages, setting on his ministers to make war about their carnal ordinances, and many inventions which they had set up through philosophy and vain deceit, whereby they were corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ; and then they persuaded the people, that their contradictory inventions came down from heaven; for that was the thing by which they sought to get their wealth; and therefore they were mighty fierce and ravenous about it, as ever ravenous wolves could be, each party claiming it as their own right, and each calling for help from the higher powers to put down the others, until their sheep's clothing became too narrow to hide such barefaced devastation; while the Lord's little flock, (many of whom through death obtained the victory,) had been sorely handled amongst them; but through all, the Lord shewed his arm to be too mighty for all the powers of darkness, in-somuch, that Satan's kingdom lost ground by the very means which he had devised to set it up, and his ministers were discovered by the light, which was as a deadly blow to the works of the devil, whose kingdom is all of darkness; so that being vanquished (or rather discovered) in his

old career, he changes his method of warfare, being an unwearied enemy ; his ministers of course change their way also ; for finding their craft endangered by fighting, now they all pretend to be for peace ; that so they might keep what they had got, and leave each other as many of the flock as each could catch (or keep,) in the retreat (or scattering) which the Lord sent amongst them, who will yet scatter them more and more ; yea, and at last will have the victory over all, that he may gather his own unto himself, which Satan's ministers seem mightily to dread, and seem to fear nothing so much as the light, lest it should discover their ways, to the disturbing of their false rest.

And here, let none deceive himself by saying, that I cannot be of Satan's ministers, seeing that I am no teacher of the people ; but stay and examine thyself ; for the question is not so much what thou profess to be, as what thou art, and whom dost thou serve, whether Christ or Satan ; (the truth or deceit ;) now, if thou should stand for the deceit of Satan, art thou not so far his minister or servant ; and if so, will it excuse thee for to say, " I am not my brother's keeper ;" if thou shouldst be one of those who should now ob-

ject and say, "though I am not my brother's keeper, yet I am all for peace, and cannot bear to hear tell of any sad works of persecution that may have taken place in former ages, as the reviving of such old sores, only tend to wound men's feelings, and seem like a sort of persecution, especially at this time, when we should all join as brethren, and forget those things which should not be once mentioned, for now the reviving of them again, is persecution which I cannot bear, seeing that it might even bring a slur upon our ministers, and should never more be named, but forgot and buried out of sight, that so we may all live in peace, harmony, and unity."

Answer, is not that the language of Satan's minister indeed? who could not bear to have the Lord's mercies, or deliverance of his people, (or the trials they endured,) repeated? and could not live in peace, rest, love, or unity, unless the remembrance thereof should be forgot for ever and buried out of sight? would not that be like the language of Cain? who no doubt would rather that his brother should lie silent in the ground, than that his blood should cry out, or a testimony be recorded of his acceptable sacrifice? so that now, if man's peace be disturbed at the revival of such

testimonies, is it not because he is like that wicked one who slew his brother? or that he still likes such works, and therefore would not have them spoken against? or at best, he chooses to run down the stream quite smooth, along with such as live according to the course of this world, in the spirit which rules in the children of disobedience, being at enmity with God, while it cries peace in the world; and although it may cry peace for a season, yea, even during a season of deceit; yet it is the root and ground of all the confusion, desolation, and war, that ever was upon the earth.

Wherefore, who art thou that dares to think, that the Lord will always bear with such as withstand the testimony that he would have borne to his judgments and mercies in the earth? and of his wonders and wonderful works unto the children of men? and of his mighty power, whereby the nations of the world hath been ruled? and the strength of mighty kings broken to shivers? and all their devices brought to nought? even by him alone who determined the times before appointed; and appointeth the bounds and limits thereof. And will he, who certified unto his prophets, many of his marvellous designs, (long

before they came to pass,) suffer them to be smothered up and hid, now that many of them hath been accomplished, and fulfilled in a marvellous manner?

Yea, and many wonderful things which he revealed and certified unto his servant John, (before they came to pass,) as largely set forth in the Book of Revelations, many of which may be seen verified and fulfilled in his wonderful workings; and seeing that it is even so, that the Lord not only revealed beforehand, but also brought to pass his doings, which is marvellous in our eyes; and after all, is there such an accursed design in any heart or mind, as now to desire to hide the wonders of the Lord from the children of men? And if there be such as bring forth wormwood and gall in that respect, is there then any wickedness in a land, that could tend more rapidly to the filling up the measure of iniquity? yea, it seems a sin of a deeper die, than most of the evils of the world; as our Lord saith, no man lighteth a candle, to be put under a bed or bushel, but setteth it upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that enter in; but he saith, that they who do evil hate the light, lest it should manifest and reprove their deeds; and he saith,

this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than the light; and surely men must love darkness and hate the light in their own consciences, even to a desperate degree, before they could grow so hardy, or hardened, as to desire, that the Lord's marvellous works in the world, should be buried, hid, covered up, or withheld from any, lest it should disturb their peace.

But alas! how opposed is such a peace, to that which Christ the Prince of Peace would give? who saith, I came not to send peace on earth but division, and he alone it is, who will divide, scatter, break in pieces, and grind to powder, all that stands opposed to his heavenly everlasting peace, of which he gives; but not as the world, giveth he, of that peace, of which there is no end; behold then the unspeakable contrast, between all the world's peace, which must be broken, and the peace of God, which passeth knowledge?

Oh! then how happy, thrice happy all! who bow to the name of Jesus, and open to him that knocketh at the door, with his convictions in the conscience, and so open the door unto him, as by him to be gathered inward, before

their day be over, in which he would gather them, even where they should see his light, for it is only they that enter in, that can see the light; even his light, wherein all the nations of them that are saved must walk, where they receive of his heavenly purifying virtue, which alone is able to save, and give the answer of a good conscience; yea, to wash and cleanse, from all dead and deceitful works, that they might so receive of his grace for grace, by opening unto him that knocks, and let him come in, who would do all their works in them and for them, even to sit as a refiner's fire, whose fan is in his hand, to purge the floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, that so he who is the truth, might baptize them indeed, and redeem from deceit, yea, out of all iniquity, and so purify them unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works, zealous for his glory alone, even to make mention of the name of the Lord, and ascribe greatness unto our God, yea, to tell of his noble acts, and praise him for his goodness, and his wonderful works unto the children of men; and to confess our many backslidings, transgressions, and sins, even the many provokings wherewith we provoked him in the wil-

derness, even in the immense progress of his dispensations, in the kindness shewn unto the ages of the world, even the kindness and forbearance of him who followed Israel, and was the spiritual rock they drank of, and that rock was Christ; who carried our sorrows, and was afflicted in all their afflictions, by whose stripes we are healed, who is the good Shepherd that giveth his life for his sheep, and will gather them from whence they had been scattered, (in the cloudy and dark day) and none is able to pluck them out of his hand, who is stronger than all, and over all, even the Lamb who was slain, and is alive again, and liveth for ever more, who must reign and rule, yea, rule the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, even all, with the rulers of the earth, who take council together against the Lord and his Anointed, to set up their own things, (even the things of Babylon) with the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, shall be cast down for to rise no more at all, that they should not always deceive the nations.

Therefore (whatever shall befall), rejoice ye holy prophets and servants of our God, whom he hath redeemed and washed in his own blood,

even his pure eternal life given freely, which cleanseth from all sin, and purgeth the conscience from dead works, and from all unrighteousness, that not having their own righteousness, they should be prepared to be clothed upon with his righteousness, even his fine linen which is white and clean and without spot, wherein they might stand undefiled, unblamable, and unreprouvable before him that sitteth upon the throne, so to make mention of the name of the Lord, and ascribe greatness unto our God, who bringeth the redeemed to Zion with songs, even the song of Moses and of the Lamb; ascribing salvation and strength unto our God, whose it is, and to whom it doth belong, world without end.

A CALL

TO SUCH

AS LOVE TO FARE SUMPTUOUSLY

EVERY DAY,

&c. &c. &c.

SECTION I.

Some Reflections upon the Iniquity of Covetousness, shewing it to be a reigning evil in many ages, even to the present day; and proving it to be Idolatry, and the root of all evil, and that the ways thereof are hateful and unwarrantable, deceitful and unprofitable. A significant hint to Merchants, Traders, and Lawyers; with some slight allusion to the woful effects of Covetousness among the People of Israel, and the stumbling-block of Iniquity alluded to in the example of Balaam, as set forth in the Old Testament.

“THE people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts,” (*Isaiah*, ix. 13.) was a mournful complaint concerning Israel of old, which is of deep spiritual

import; and applies to a state of slighting, or kicking against conviction, or against the reproofs of instruction in the conscience, and therefore may be quite applicable to the way and manner of life, in which a people who chose their own ways, (even ways that are not good,) may settle down, yea, even in a national respect; which may be too much the condition of many, down to the present day: and now, if we slight the calls and warnings which may be held forth unto us in mercy, (in order that we should thoroughly amend our ways and our doings) which if we consider not, neither lay to heart, should we not in such a case, be like unto those, of whom the Prophet complained? that after all that had been done for them, yet they would not seek the Lord while he was to be found: and the portion or judgments that await such, may be read in the same chapter and many other parts of Scripture; and also the cause, why the Lord's anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still, even against a people which had been favoured above all the families of the earth.

Now let us consider, whether any warning could speak louder than those which have lately been brought to our very door, even within a few years, wherein we have been witnesses of the great and sore turnings, overturnings, perplexity, and distress of Nations, which hath fallen upon many parts of Europe, (evidently,)

as a very sore stroke, chastisement, or judgment : and although that calamity was not then permitted to reach unto the British Empire, in like measure as other nations were visited, nevertheless, is there any amongst us, so stupid, or sottish, as not to perceive, that those shakings reached even unto us? speaking loudly and powerfully in the language of warning, if we could but understand ; and although we have as yet been dealt with in great forbearance, and were then spared from being smitten in the signal manner that neighbouring states, nations, and governments, were chastised and overturned ; yet was there not abundant cause for us also, to remember the dreadful shaking of the rod ? yea, to remember, with reverend gratitude unto him that rules in the kingdoms of men, seeing that he passed over this nation, and did not then overturn it like the rest ? and as he only knows the cause why we were then spared, should not the consideration thereof, arouse us to an earnest examination, whether or no, we also may be found, still indulging in those things, because of which, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience ?

And if such examination was sincere, and in good earnest, we should not fail to examine what those things are, which caused the wrath of God to fall upon the children of disobedience. We may read in the fifth chapter of the *Ephesians*, that amongst those things because of which

cometh the wrath of God, covetousness is repeated, of which it is said, that it ought not to be once named amongst them, seeing that no covetous man who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God : and in *Colossians*, third chapter, covetousness is called Idolatry, where we are warned, to “ mortify our members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry ; for which things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

If it should be asked, what is covetousness, or how shall we know what is meant thereby ? I should answer, that covetousness and pride are near of kin ; and it is the insatiable craving or desire of the carnal mind, which is not redeemed from the inordinate love and desire of earthly or sensual enjoyments, for the fulfilling of the lust of the flesh, and of the eye, or the pride of life ; but here it may suffice, simply to say, that it is selfishness, or a desiring and seeking after more than is needful or right, whether of pleasure, wealth, or honour, &c. and who are thus covetous, may be known by their fruits, unless the god of this world should have blinded the mind, for every tree is to be known by his own fruit ; that is the universal test and standard, set up by Him, who knew how to hit all cases at once, let their state, situation, or profession be what it may ; whether high or low, rich or poor, all are comprehended therein.

But I may not attempt to instance many of the various ways whereby covetousness appears not only as an individual, but a national evil ; yet I shall slightly touch upon or advert to a few of the most laudable and useful vocations amongst men, which yet we see wofully perverted through covetousness ; yea, even to such a pitch of folly, as to carry their own chastisement along with them, or at least following after so closely, as to appear treading upon the heels ; yea, so signally, as to choke the devourer, while the prey is yet between the teeth ; as may sometimes be seen, even in the fate of some great monopolists and money changers, (which I shall notice first of all,) who bow down to the idol of commerce, and go forth so devotedly in sacrificing thereunto, as if they would monopolize all sorts of wares, until the bounty of the creation, overpowers the digestion of that insatiable maw,* whereby they burst asunder and break, by which means the world is sometimes rid of a monster, that otherwise (through cove-

* If any should query, why I use the word *maw*, being such a rude, uncommon term ? I may tell them, that I knew of no expression more suitable to set forth the greediness of the great monopolist and money changer ; seeing that he must be desperately disordered with some unnatural fever, or bewitchment of Satan, to cause such insatiable craving, which seems to need some extraordinary term to express it, which I did not choose to call by the name of stomach, seeing that the stomach, even of a wild beast, might be satisfied, when full ; but the other could never be satisfied, being the effect of sin, which carries the gnawing worm along with it.

tousness,) would raise the price, not only of the comforts, but even the necessaries of life, beyond the reach of the poor, and the industrious, to whom he might have been a choice benefactor, if he had but acted in the moderation, and been aware of covetousness ; and yet it is remarkable, that some of those great monopolists, will take to themselves the credit, of being of infinite use in the world, by giving employment and support to such and such vast numbers of poor dependents, who, they think, might perish, only for the relief they derive from them ; for they get so blinded, that they cannot (or will not) see, how that one of them, often engrosses more to himself, than should employ ten ; and that there is not more of the poor employed by him, than such ten might set to work in the right order and moderation.

But although the career of the great monopolist should be stopped, when he can go no further, yet the evil does not end there, but the iniquity thereof will go still further, for the tail end is nothing better than the rest, whatever worse, inasmuch, that when the hope of their gain fails, they sometimes blaspheme the goodness and providence of God, by attributing all their disasters to the badness of the times, as we often hear say in such cases, that they are sad times, when favoured with great plenty ; which I should not have noticed here, if such language had been confined merely to the individuals concerned, who might speak from the ravings of disappointment ;

but it has been a language too generally uttered, not only by the sufferers themselves, but even by those who were not concerned.

They also join in the exclamation, that such and such breakings down were all owing to the pressure of the times, when the bounty and goodness of kind Providence press upon them with abundance; then it is thought great charity, to excuse such works, by blaspheming that Providence, in order to take the blame from off the covetous man, whom they seem to think had suffered enough by his disappointment, without adding blame to his suffering, and so they would throw the blame upon the kindness and bounty of the Almighty; and that is considered charity; but it rather resembles the serpent's charity, (if it could bear such a name,) that first beguiled man into such ways, and then would leave him there, or drive him still further into the mire and dirt.

But I shall not attempt to enumerate the many evils, which the tail end of such breakings down bring along with them in their ⁴brain; it may suffice here, just to say, that it often ends in entanglements and perplexities, whereby such as are concerned, and their creditors, may also be entangled and come to loss; for the end of such things are mostly of evil consequences, so that it is an ill savour indeed, which such a great carcass sends forth, yea, such a stench, that those who may be compared to birds or beasts of

prey, gather about it; for the entanglements and festering which enter into the bowels thereof, is quite grateful to the stomach of lawyers, who may delight to entangle it still more, that so they might make sure their prey.

For, among that tribe of lawyers, may be found, a generation as insatiable as ever their victim had been, and as full of covetousness, which though practised in a lesser degree, may be still more gross and sordid; for they prey upon the contentions of the people, and it is reported of some of them, that if in their power, they would not quit the prey until they eat it out, for which purpose they would tear it to pieces between each other; but let none mistake me, as if I meant, that the calling of a lawyer should make a man covetous; for I did not allude to such as are exercised in the thing that is equal and right; what I have said, should rather be to the praise of such, but I mean the lawyer that is exercised in covetous practices; and these also are to be known by their fruits, whereby it is evident that such abound in the world, as may be seen, by how much they have muddied the stream of the law, and that which should be all plain sense, they have turned into endless entanglements and intricacies, so that even in proportion to the increase of general knowledge, they seem to make the laws so much the more intricate, and uncertain, in so much, that our Saviour's description of them, appears to be as largely

verified at this day, as in any age of the world, even that they, like the priests, take away the key of knowledge ; which is strikingly evident in divers ways, yea, whatsoever they touch, may be sure to be entangled, even from the most trifling case, to the very formation of the laws.

Surely it could never have been the intention of the legislature, to send forth so many confused acts, and laws, which seem as hard to be fully understood, as if in a strange language ; by which it is evident, that some way or other, the lawyers crept in, and had some hand in the construction of them, as the track of their fingers may be seen in the general structure thereof ; which could not have been so confused by the exercise of sound reason ; for men of common sense can speak so as to understand each other's meaning ; and surely it was designed, that the people should understand those laws which were framed, in order to be strictly observed by them.

But the simple fact seems to be, that Mystery Babylon hath dominion in the mental, yea even like as she hath in (what is called) the religious world ; and all that cometh through covetousness : for men want to be getting by all means, and so would confuse and make the laws mighty hard to be expounded, or rather, that they should never be explained, that so they may make a vast deal of it, or that there should be no end of their getting, and also, that the world should esteem them wiser than the rest of man-

kind, while they pretend to expound what themselves had entangled ; otherwise the laws should have been all plain sense.

But now, we sometimes hear of a bench of judges, sitting upon the most trivial question of right and wrong ; and after a great deal of feigned labour, seem hardly to determine what it should mean, though it be but a simple matter within the reach of common capacity, that such great lawyers affect to find so hard to be understood ; and yet they would not be thought fit, or qualified, to discuss, or judge of those plain simple cases, unless they were skilled in vast researches of high learning, even such as whether there be a world in the moon, or the like. And all this cometh to pass, because men will not come up to that glorious standard, of doing unto others, in all things, even as we would they should do unto us.

Yet they that pervert the laws through covetousness, may not make the more of it in the end, as men will be made the more warily to shun them, as they see them become dangerous ; which may be the most useful end that such law can be turned to at last ; even to make men afraid to touch it, least it should pierce them through the hand, which (though it may have its use that way) do not make such as handle it deceitfully, one whit the more honest, nor less covetous, neither would it bespeak a christian spirit in a people, who should need such means, to teach

them to do unto others as they would be done unto.

And yet in Babel, where the language is confounded, we may observe, that all the forementioned covetous merchants and lawyers are styled gentlemen, while by the tenor of their ways, they might rather be called Gentile men, which (in scripture) is a term applied to men who knew not God, or desire not the knowledge of his ways: and now if any should call this a severe charge, let such know, that I charge or judge no man; I only point to some of the ways of men, and whosoever is found therein, let them defend it if they be able to prove, that such are the ways of God and of the cross of Christ, and of seeking his things and not their own, and of doing unto all men as they would be done unto; which (one day) will be found to be commandments of such solemn weight, that the fashion of the times, or the craftiness of men, will be a miserable excuse, for having set at nought, or done as they list therewith.

I have no view of descending into what is considered the most base and sordid actions of the baser sort; nor yet of the horrid rapine and wars of higher orders; which, though they be all the fruit of covetousness, yet I shall pass over such things, seeing that all men profess to abhor them, therefore I shall confine these remarks, by slightly touching upon very few of those vocations, which are both useful and

desirable, yet wofully perverted through covetousness; yea, what abundance of disorder hath covetousness laboured and studied to promote in the creation; even by the means of the knowledge of those useful arts, (wherewith these nations hath been favoured beyond others;) do we not see men straining every invention, as if with all their might, they labour to make that knowledge a curse which might have been designed as a blessing, (if kept in its place) yea, even from the least to the greatest, what strange inventions are still labouring to be brought to maturity, whereby men would (if possible) pervert the right order and harmony of the creation, and so turn all things out of the natural course designed by the bountiful Creator, for health of body, and good of the souls of his creatures? Hence we may see many attempts to overturn and destroy the true harmony of nature, by vast ranges of machinery, reared up out of great overgrown capitals, which men (that know not what to do with their wealth) would employ, to set many thousands idle, by engrossing the labour and industry of the poor; employing fire, water, smoke, and vapour, (which would be all good in their place) but were never designed, to invade and perform, the right, natural, and lawful occupations of men, women, and children, in the manner we now see invention labouring to invade many of the sweet innocent and eligible vocations and occupations of the poor; even such as spin-

ning, carding, combing, weaving, and many other light, easy and natural employments, which of right, and in righteousness, did belong to the poor, as their right and natural inheritance ; that employment should remain for their support, in a plain, simple, and rational manner, in the creation of God ; and that it should not be wrested from them through great wealth, invention, and covetousness, but that they should be allowed to labour naturally and rationally, in their cottages, with their little families, where they should praise the Lord, (in the element designed for them to breathe in,) and not be promiscuously huddled together in great factories, to attend monstrous machines, as in some places may be seen, men, women, and children, to the great detriment of their health and morals, and to the taking away of their rightful and natural employment, under a delusive pretence of bringing wares cheaper to the market, by means of great machinery.

All of which, and many other such like things, are called great national improvements and advantage, by the blind and the covetous, who would have the assurance to exclaim and say, that we are the benefactors of the poor, by us it is that they find employment and support, &c. while, in reality, such are a grievous and sore national calamity, and oppression of the poor, and though they may make a flourish for a time, yet I say, (if their projects should succeed,) mark the end of such doings.

But although they have attempted, and still labour, to make a breach upon the boundaries of the marvellous economy of the creation, and have made some inroads upon the right and natural employments of the poor, and still study, (with various devices) to pervert and destroy the beautiful order, simplicity, and harmony of the creation of God, yet he hath set bounds to their arrogant projects ; so that hitherto, many of their schemes are seen to be confounded, and the sweet, congenial, healthful occupation of the husbandman, still appears placed out of the reach of such invasion, which, if they could invade, might be dreaded as a national evil, big with consequences more awful than even that of an invading army, if any temporal calamity could be more awful.

And as for the delusive projects of bringing wares cheaper to market, out of the right and natural order ; that could only be effected by raising the price of provisions, which if so done, artificially and designedly, in order to support great and oppressive rents for lands, by men that may covet to uphold great expensive customs and ways of living, that they might set their nest on high ; and if it should be partly for the support of an expensive state, the root of all such is covetousness, which destroys and perverts the true order and harmony of the creation of God, who in the day of his arising, will bring into judgment, even for perverting his choice temporal favours ; who hath warned us, that such as are

not faithful in the outward things of this life, shall not be entrusted with the heavenly riches ; and it should be remembered, that the influence of custom (and the desire to imitate others) is so powerful, that many have fallen into those things, which hath no real use, only to gratify the carnal mind, many of which customs (though some now a-days, seem to think they could not live without them ;) are not only a drudgery to drag along, but also, that the customs of the people are still so vain, that they tend wofully to derange, and destroy, the beautiful order and harmony in the creation of God.

My aim in making these remarks (even upon this, which is only a thing by itself) is to remind all sorts of people, high and low, rich and poor, yea, the wise man as well as the weaker capacity, how deeply it behoves us altogether, to examine and prove the ground of our standing, if haply we may be favoured to see what is our foundation, lest the day should come upon us as a thief in the night, and how awful would it be, if the night should overtake us, when too late to be aroused, to perceive, that our houses had never yet been set in order according to the will of God, even so far as appertains to a righteous regulation, of the outward conduct, how then should we go in that way, which leads to peace in the heavenly journey ? and how should we learn to do well, unless we first cease to do evil ? and how should we cease to do evil

while the heart goes after covetousness, which may be cloaked by laudable pretensions?

All evil comes from within, out of the heart of man; it is from thence that covetousness doth grow and send forth its fruit in divers ways and workings, which (as I said, I shall forbear to enumerate,) but I shall attempt, a little, to bring into view some of those states that may be the least suspected; even some of those, that may be thought quite unreprouable and well enough; yea quite clear with respect to covetousness; but seeing that even in such, the love of money may reign, and bear as great sway, as in the the most raving, greedy, money-monger of the world, though in so hidden a way, that even they themselves know not that it is so; for not merely by the largeness, but by the nature of the fruit, it is to be known: and here I might instance, that even the sluggard, who lives upon others, and does nothing at all, neither appears to carry any thing, may be ranked among the covetous, as in *Proverbs* xxi. 25. 26. because that he coveteth greedily that which is another's right, and not his own, (for the support of his body) instead of labouring with his own hands in the thing that is honest.

I now come to treat of that order of men, which may be considered as least of all to be suspected; yet, nevertheless, their case appears

of the greatest moment both as an individual and general, yea, a national concern ; I mean, the teachers of the people ; such as are called the clergy, for whose sake I mean to allot the principal part of this and the following section : and if any should ask, why it comes to pass, that I dwell more upon their case than upon all other classes of the people, seeing that they are but men, (and few,) and subject to frailty like others ?

Answer, first, because their case is the case of the people, seeing that they cannot be considered as distinct from them, but quite one with them, yea, they are of the people, and one with them ; inasmuch as that they who set them up, and uphold them, may be accountable for their life and conduct, and partakers in all their ways ; yea, and although the people should sometimes even complain of their covetousness, yet it is evident that they would be like them themselves, and act just as they do, were they in their stead, or why else do they set them up, uphold, and scrupulously adhere to them and to their ways ? therefore, whatsoever may be applicable to the teachers of the people, should apply to the people that acknowledge them as their teachers.

Secondly, hence it is, that the state and condition of the teachers may be of the utmost importance, inasmuch as their precept and example is of general influence upon the life and conduct of such as adhere to them implicitly, and pin their faith (as it were,) to the sleeve of their teachers,

and choose, rather to rely wholly upon them, than labour (for themselves) for that bread which cometh from Christ alone, and nourisheth the soul unto eternal life ; and if they should fall into such a woful state, as was charged upon Israel under the law, as a mark of desperate degeneracy, when it was said of them, that from the least to the greatest every one was given to covetousness ; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely ; and so they healed the heart of the people slightly ; and if such should be (even in measure) the condition of the professors of the glorious gospel of light, life, and salvation ; and if the teachers thereof were given to covetousness, would they not rather be a woful cause of spreading darkness, death, and destruction over the people that set them up, uphold, and adhere to them exclusively, in blind implicit deference ? and if the people love to have it so, the Lord saith, what will ye do in the end thereof !

Here let us not deceive ourselves, but take it along with us by the way, that the prophet in rebuking their covetousness, (which is the mother of falseness) had to take in all classes and orders of the people ; from the least to the greatest, from the prophet to the priest ; so that all, not only such as were appointed priests under the law of Moses, but men professing superior gifts, even the gift of prophecy, yet, notwithstanding such high profession, were given to covetousness ; not that we are

to conclude from thence, (that even at that time) every individual was given to covetousness, and that the Lord had not reserved a remnant as in the days of Elijah ; for even then, he might have reserved unto himself thousands that had not bowed to Baal nor kissed his image, and yet in that day, (when the nation was near to be visited for their sins,) iniquity had so overspread every class, and all orders of the people, that, from the least to the greatest they were given to covetousness. (See *Jeremiah*, vi. 13. 14. & viii. 10. 11.)

How much more then doth it behove all, now in this gospel day (wherein more purity is required,) to examine, whether they themselves are clear in that respect, yea, even some that withdraw and dissent from the national church, (because they saw the teachers thereof given to covetousness) had need to prove their own selves, and examine what it is they love most ; seeing that men may be gifted with peculiar gifts, and may even possess very little of this world's goods, and yet it is possible that even the heart of such might be tempted to go after covetousness, yea, and even such may be tempted to covet the praise and commendation of the men of this world, who seek to have their portion in this life : so that I mean hereby to remind the reader, to keep in view, that although I am now about to offer some close remarks upon some of those things, which are the most evident, glaring, and barefaced marks of covetousness in the teachers of the people,

and may speak plainly of that abomination, which is set up and upheld by the laws of a state, which may enact laws, even amongst Christians, for to make the ministers thereof covetous, yea to a degree, which may now be compared to that which befell Israel of old, when they set up that shameful thing, even to offer incense unto Baal.

Yet I would not be understood thereby, to lessen (in any wise) the thing that may exist in a more hidden way, seeing that the want of opportunity, or ability, to fulfil the desire of the covetous mind, does not make it less guilty than if it had fulfilled all its desire, if so be, that the heart should still go after covetousness; but seeing that covetousness which is the root of all evil, is promoted in the more hidden way, by being set up and upheld by a state, and even encouraged in those called ministers of the gospel, (and by their example encouraged in the people at large) that now they are not at all ashamed when they commit abomination therein, neither can they blush; whereby it may be observed, to what a pitch of darkness the love of money blindeth the mind, even beyond what can be conceived by the natural man.

And now, seeing that I have mentioned Baal, and think it likely that I may repeat that name in the course of this work; and as some may be likely to query, why I should make mention of such a term? I would inform them, that the word

Baal presented to my mind, as a fit and suitable term, to describe something that yet remains in these nations, against which, I believe, the Lord hath a controversy, and will yet plead with them in judgment and in fury poured forth, if that shameful thing be not otherwise sought out, and put away from amongst us ; yea, the very remnant of Baal must at last be destroyed out of the land : and as I desire to be as simple, and as fully understood as possible ; and as Baal seems to be the thing that fixed upon my mind, and also, I know of no term more descriptive of that which I am now endeavouring to set forth, as a cause of great heaviness, gloom, and darkness hanging over the nations, which I believe is not our heavenly Father's will that it should always be so, although our own doings hath procured death, darkness, and barrenness, even when his glorious gospel, should have brought life, light, and fruitfulness ; and will he not visit for his own great name and truth's sake ?

And seeing that I mean to address those, who read, and profess to value the scripture, I would appeal to them in good earnest, to look at those things which are written for our learning, reproof, and admonition, but not to be trifled with, as a thing to make a fine oration of, or to get money by it ; but if thou art in good earnest, and determined not to fool away thy time, or befool thy own soul, look what is therein written, only lay aside all subtlety and craftiness ; yea,

beware of that, as of the serpent; and if thou art striving to serve only the Lord, and to love him above all, with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thy self, then, (if thou art in such a case) happy wilt thou be, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord; and such will know the Lord their God, and may look into the Scriptures, and there read wonderful things out of his law; yea, wonders without number, and none of them without a solemn signification, that even the historical part, is so stored, with such an endless fund of blessed instruction, and correction, that we may behold every leaf of it with admiration and gratitude unto Him, before whom all things are naked and bare, even before Him with whom we have to do.

And there we read of that great and dreadful name, the Lord our God, whom only we should serve; and there also, we may read largely of the lords and gods many which are in the world; of which we are admonished to beware, yea, and warned, not only by the many testimonies born against the sin of Idolatry, but also by many awful examples, of dreadful judgments, which were poured forth upon individuals and nations, on account of their Idolatry and other horrible crimes, which were the effects of forsaking the Lord, and going after the gods of the nations; and although their gods were very many, yet Idolatry was all the same under what name or form soever; but we find, that among

the people of Israel, it is very frequently and strikingly designated by the name of Baal, which appears to be very significant, far beyond any thing that I may attempt to set forth, so that here it may suffice to notice, that Baal hath an allusion to Balaam; not only the word, but the manner of their being frequently mentioned together: and even in the first account we find of Balaam, it is said, that Balack took him up to the high places of Baal; by which it appears, that Baal was the Idol, and Balaam the minister.

Could any thing be more simple or instructive, when we consider what Balaam was, even a man of rare qualifications? and also, like what many would call, one of great piety; but then look what he was and tremble? yea, tremble, oh! ye nations that set up such, and also tend to make them what they are; for many who have fallen into such a snare, might have been brave men, if they had not been taken with that bait which might be too much for them to resist; as we may see, the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, holding out their gold bait to destroy him for whom Christ died; yea, and therefore, may have in their skirts, the blood of the souls of poor innocents, who (peradventure for some accursed state policy*) might by them be tempted to sell soul and all, like Balaam, to whom let us re-

* Alluding to the great temptation held forth by what is called church preferment, for the sake of which, many have been tempted to run into the ministry of the church, who were not fit

turn again, to take one glance more at what he was.

We may observe in the first place, that the leading crime which we find pointed out in him for our warning, was, that he loved to get wages for his ministry, whether of wealth, honour, or preferment in the world, no matter which, since he loved some earthly reward, while he was set up and highly esteemed in the nation, yea even as a prophet; and he is held forth unto us, (for a warning,) as one endowed with rare gifts, but fell from or lost that good state by letting his heart out after some earthly reward, so that (to speak plainly) he became a lover of earthly things, which were got by his service at the high places of Baal, more than he loved the Lord, by whom he appears to have been so signally favoured; whence we may conclude, that Baal became his god, or rather the wages which came to him for his work at the high places of Baal; so that (to be short) the wages of Baal was what he loved most, and therefore, the wages or earthly reward was his god: hence it is, that all who go after Baal, serve him for earthly reward, and that is their god, no matter in what shape or pretence they serve, seeing that the thing they love most, is their god.

for it, (neither could be,) seeing that none could be fit who undertake it for any worldly consideration, whether to climb up into livings, or sees, or whatever else they may call them.

And now let us mark well and take notice, (see *Numbers*, xxii. and xxiii.) how his heart went after the gain which the king offered him for the exercise of his gift; as we read, when the princes first came to Balaam with their great gifts and promises of high promotion, the Lord said unto him, thou shalt not go with them, nor curse Israel, for they are blessed; and yet after all that, when the princes came to him the second time, with still larger gifts, and higher offers, he went again to inquire of the Lord, as if he could think, that the Lord might have changed his mind in so short a time; even though he had so straightly charged him to have nothing to do with them; whereby it is evident, that the heart of Balaam went after (or rather went along with) the princes, and with their cause, even though he saw the Lord against them; but as he would look after the great offer which had been made him, he affected to go and inquire again, therefore, the Lord permitted him to go the way wherein he desired (which proved to be the way of destruction) seeing that he had rejected the Lord's way (or counsel) he would not be forced, but was permitted to go in the way that his heart most desired; and a sad way that is indeed, even to this day; and such is the lot of all who go against conviction.

And we may also behold woful instances of great madness, folly, and instability,

amongst the people of Israel, even in the time of Moses, while the Lord's judgments were before their face ; in their passage through the wilderness, they began to fall away, or slide into those things, out of which the Lord was leading them, as is recorded of the matter of Baalpeor ; which caused the anger of the Lord to wax hot against Israel, and, which appears to have been contrived by the great subtlety of Balaam, who was a chief of that generation, that always was for making an affinity, or agreement, betwixt earth and heaven. He opened a way, for an affinity to be formed between Israel and his own people (which is called the matter of Baalpeor,) even with his way of religion which was exceeding plausible ; though the performance thereof, was for wages (or reward) upon the high places of Baal ; and that opened the way for the princes of Israel to join in affection and affinity with the princes of his people, which in holy writ, is called whoring after them and their gods ; from whom the Lord would have his people wholly separated, yea, he would put enmity between them, because they would live in the spirit of this world, according to the desire of the flesh, and of the carnal mind, which is enmity with God, and so, being of the earth, earthy, they would sit down therein and desire nothing higher, because that was the spirit they lived in, whereby they became exceedingly corrupt, even while they made a mighty high, specious,

and plausible profession of religion, and faith in God, upon the high places of Baal.

But the Lord would lead his people out of all such vanities of the nations, and also out of their spirit, life, and affections, as he would lead them to look beyond earthly, for new and heavenly affections, as typified by the promised land, to which he was leading them; which they could not possess, if their views and affections were all earthly and sensual, (even though they were but as a figure of the substance which is in Christ;) for that was the cause wherefore that good land spewed out its former inhabitants; even because of their iniquities, yea, even while they made a specious profession of religion and faith in God (according to the manner of such times of ignorance) as may be observed by their zeal for the service of Baal, which would seem to be thought something superior to what was common in those times,* which made it so much the more delusive.

And we need not much marvel, if the great (though subtile) wisdom of Balaam, (with his wonderful sayings, eloquence, and prophecies,) should be very enticing, and taking, with the people of Israel, when held forth by a man, so renowned in the world for his wisdom and piety as Balaam was; so that we find, that through his counsel, there was an alliance, or affinity

* The Midianites were those amongst whom Moses had sojourned; some of whom appear to have been an enlightened people. (see *Exodus*, xviii.)

formed, even between the princes of Midian and of Israel, so as to cause the anger of the Lord to be kindled against Israel, yea and also, to hasten swift destruction upon his own people, even upon Midian, &c. to whom he designed to do great service ; and might even have expected to work their deliverance by his pastoral exertions, in bringing about an alliance between them and Israel.

But in that also he proved more blind than the ass he rode upon ; seeing that he could not have invented a surer way to bring upon them swift destruction, than the very means which he had devised to avert it ; and how should it be otherwise, for he was a destroyer, even as all who preach for hire and reward is, and ever was ; for such leaders of the people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed even to this very day ; insomuch, that now we may see a wonderful similarity between his ways, and the ways of such as preach for hire, and divine for money, and seek preferment that way, even to the present day ; except with this difference, that few of them are so highly gifted as Balaam appears to have been, and which is set forth, as if designed by Heaven, to draw the attention of mankind to such an example ; therefore I shall take a little further notice of what is written respecting him, seeing that his case is held forth as a notable monument of warning to the ages of the world.

All that would take warning by the signal fate

of Balaam, may observe him set forth as a man who saw great and good things, and highly favoured of the Lord, but by letting out his mind after the gain, that might be made of his ministry, he became leavened into the same spirit as the people who set him up, and from whom he received such reward; and as they destroyed him, he would destroy them also by his ministry; and so like people, like priest, tending to settle each other down in their ways, upon which the Lord was bringing destruction for their iniquity.

We may observe by Balaam's conduct, that he became so thoroughly leavened into the spirit of the people among whom he dwelt, (through his love of unrighteous gain,) that instead of warning them to repent and thoroughly amend their ways and their doings, he set to work, with his wiles, to entice the Lord's people to partake of the sins, because of which, he saw his own people ready to be cut off; and all through love of the wages of unrighteousness; which so blinded and deceived him, that he seemed prepared to deceive himself and all around him with all his might, even while he professed the highest pitch of sanctity and self-denial, saying to Balack, that if he gave him his house full of silver and gold, he could do (or say) nothing but what the Lord commanded him, which (no doubt) made the king the more to fear and reverence him; but he that could take silver or gold in any wise, as the reward of his ministry, cannot see where it would carry him.

And if the ways of Balaam, and his idol Baal (which was as the wealth he sought after,) was an accursed thing, which drew down such sore vengeance upon Israel of old, as we may read throughout the Judges, Kings, Chronicles, and Prophets? I say, if such a thing could not be borne under the dispensation of the outward types, figures, and shadows (of the good things to come) of which it is said, that the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of the better hope did? and seeing that we profess to believe in that better hope of the gospel which maketh perfect through the all sufficiency of that grace, and truth, which comes by Jesus Christ; and now, if after all that hath been done for us, we should turn aside, not only to the bondage of the law for filthy lucre's sake? but even covet the very same thing that is clearly figured out unto us by the heathen idols and idolatry, how should we escape in such a case? would not even the heathen rise up in judgment against us? and who would deny, that the ground of all heathen idolatry, and the setting up of idols was covetousness? and that all whomsoever duped the people with Baal, or any other idol, did it (in unbelief) for the sake of money, even as a thing by which they sought to get their wealth, in which case, such as receive, and they who pay for such vanities, were all of one?

But alas! how do we see high professing christians, who even boast of the purity in which

they hold forth the glorious and free gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? now to behold them at this day, making such a mock of it, as to turn it all to their own purpose, as Balaam desired to have done, even while they should know, that no name or profession would have sanctified his crimes, while his heart went after his idol Baal, in seeking unrighteous gain; and now, are men become so blind, as even to suppose, that the name and profession of Christ, and his free gospel, should sanctify the very same crime in them at this day? would it not rather make the crime appear of a tenfold deeper die? when we remember the cloud of witnesses, which from age to age, through various dispensations of God unto mankind (even in the times of ignorance which God winked at, and under the law) all speaking the same uniform language, that it was the Lord's determined purpose, to have even the remnant of Baal, (and all mercenary usage) purged clean from the ministry that he would own? and more especially in the fulness of the gospel, of which the Lord himself left us an example that we should follow his steps; and whatsoever is in any ways connected with an hireling ministry, is clean contrary both to his precept and example.

Objection,—Some may object and say, that the case of Balaam is an unfair comparison to that of a gospel minister, seeing that Balaam was a heathen, and fell away so desperately, as even

to practice divination and enchantment, while the minister would abhor such a thing, although he might covet a good living and like it too, as well as ever Balaam did, as the reward of his ministry, yet nevertheless, he should be true to God, and stand for the cause of virtue and of the gospel, and not betray it like Balaam, for the minister can love and serve God, though he should have an eye to his own temporal preferment.

Answer,—is not the case of such a minister and that of Balaam quite the same? if so be, that he should have an eye to promotion in the world, as he had? is not that the evil eye, which filleth the whole body with darkness? and that is set forth as the cause of his downfall, which so blinded him, that he could not see the angel with his drawn sword, to cut off all that go in the way wherein he went; and now, all ye that be of the generation of Balaam, though cloaked up under the name or profession of the gospel, think ye that such a cloak will save you from the stroke that awaits all that go in that way, would it not rather aggravate the crime? to profess Christ and go in the way of Balaam? which Peter calls madness, rebuked by the dumb ass? And now look, all ye who go in that way, having one eye looking to the glory of the world, and another looking to the Lord, what think ye? could such a one either truly love or fear him, while they can so trifle with his glorious cause, and set it at nought, by preferring the fashion of

the times, to his high and holy way, who saith, if thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light? but ye that plead for the evil eye which hath a double view, whereby the whole body is filled with darkness, what think ye of the safety of such a way?

And oh! ye rulers that set up and uphold such a way, and oh! ye people that cry it up: do ye indeed think that you shall escape? and that all the responsibility must lie with the poor pastors, whom you are the cause of thrusting forth into such a sea of temptation? and if the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch together? and now, ho! all of you together, who set them up, that preach for gain; do ye not set up a way, in which, they that go that way, cannot see the destruction that is therein? for it is the way of darkness, enchantment, sorcery, and divination, and the root of all idolatry, yea, the substance of all the heathen idolatry, which was first set up for gain, even as the wood and stone &c. which they worshipped, was but the shadow of idolatry, but the gain gotten thereby, was the substance, yea, the very thing which their soul adored, and lusted after.

And that was the thing that blinded Balaam, and blindeth all at this day, who go after unrighteous gain as he went, yea, and though they may be as eloquent and learned as Balaam was, and profess to expound the law and the

gospel, while yet they know not either, neither can they see the adversary in the way wherein they go; and with all their learning and enchantments, they cannot see the difference between a prince of Midian, and of Israel, nor can they see, how that Balaam must be slain with the sword that falls upon Midian, neither can they see, how that the jewels and ornaments taken in the spoil of Midian, should be laid up in the tabernacle, as a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord; I say, that none who go in the way of Balaam, can ever see those things to their comfort, even though they should make never such eloquent orations thereupon, or get ever such large money for deceiving themselves and the people: and is it not a grief which must be bitter in the end (ere it be removed,) that the self-same thing, which drew down the wrath and judgments of God upon the people of Israel (from age to age,) should now be set up as a leading order of such as make a high profession of the gospel, yea, and even under a profession of superior reformation?

We read in the Old Testament, throughout the time of the judges, kings, and prophets, what sore judgments and destruction fell upon the people, on-account of their forsaking the Lord and serving Baal and other gods in their groves and high places, yea, and though they had a constant succession of the Lord's zealous faithful servants, raised up amongst them from time

to time, both of judges, kings, priests, prophets, and of the people, who not only testified against, but laboured to withstand, root up, and destroy the corruption occasioned by the sin of Idolatry : and we read in the books of Kings and Chronicles, of many zealous efforts, to reform the people, and rescue them from going after the manners of the heathen in their worship, &c. (which was all selfish and sensual ;) and we read of much that was done (according to the dispensation they were then under,) and great things were accomplished at sundry times, even by some of their kings ; but after all that had been done for them (by the Lord and his servants,) we find their records of what they could effect, frequently concluded by saying, that “ nevertheless the high places were not taken away, but the people still sacrificed upon the high places,” and the reason is there given, that it was because that, “ as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.” (*2 Chronicles*, xx. 33.)

Behold what a comprehensive reason we see given in few words, which was, that the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers even unto that day, after all that had been done for them, both in mercy and in judgments, and fury poured forth, because of their backslidings, and proneness to cleave unto the manners of the nations in their selfishness and sensuality ; which the God of their fathers

had determined, that his own people should not sit down in, even in any sort ; and he is not as a man, that could change, though he shewed long forbearance, setting good and evil before them, that they might choose the good ; but he would not force them, for that is not according to his will, as he would have a free people, and he would have the whole heart, otherwise they could not be his people ; for none could ever be his people, but such as loved and served him freely for his own sake, without fee or reward.

And all whose hearts are so prepared unto him, they care for no high place, because they see him above all high places ; their eye being opened, they see him to their exceeding joy, and not as an adversary in the way to destroy them, and such is the lot and the blessing of all the pure in heart ; they see God, and they see their way, for Christ is their way, and there is no destruction in that way, for it is a way of salvation, and will remain, when all the groves and high places of man's erecting, which he sets up for self-ends, shall be destroyed, burned up, and ground to powder, by the power of Christ, even as the stone, that Daniel saw cut out without hands, which should break in pieces, all their idols, their earth, and their great strength.

And that is what the God of the fathers was preparing the people for, by all his shift-

ings of them, as from vessel to vessel, in all his dispensations, since the day that he called out Abraham to leave his country and his father's house; and many of the fathers saw the day of Christ (though afar off) and were glad; yea, and the dispensation of the law, was to prepare the way of the Lord: and therein we are left this lesson above all the rest, even to shew us, how unspeakably weak, and imperfect, the first institution in the world appeared, compared with that of the gospel; yea, the law itself, though glorious in its season, fell so far short of the gospel, that, when compared therewith, the one may be called all bondage, and the other, all freedom.

Therefore, let such as profess the gospel, beware lest their conduct give the lie to that great truth, and so, prove themselves ungrateful receivers of such an unmerited offer of boundless grace; yea, such an unspeakable gift, that even the types and figures of the law, were exceeding solemn in the time and season thereof, as being types and shadows of the substance which came by Jesus Christ, the fulness of all, who fulfilled and ended all the offerings and ceremonials of the law; yea, he ended even those things which pointed unto himself, for he said (when about to finish his great work,) that "the things concerning me have an end;" so then, all those changeable things which pointed to him, and shadowed him forth, had an

end, for he fulfilled and ended them all, and he only remained, that hath no end ; and having fulfilled and ended the old law or covenant, he became the mediator of the better covenant, of the pouring forth of his spirit, to instruct, guide, sanctify, and save, all that take heed thereunto.

And that is the thing, which in the fulness of time (when the law was fulfilled and ended, and the carnal ordinances thereof abolished) the people were called unto ; and such whose hearts were prepared unto the God of the fathers, left all the high places that ever had been set up in the world, and not only the high places, but all old things which passed away, were then to be left, and all become new, and all of God, even of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

And as we may see, how the great author of eternal salvation, designed that we should not be mistaken in the simplicity of his gospel (unless we chose not to understand ;) he opens the promulgation thereof with a poor waterwoman, as he sat weary at the well, not only reproving her sins, but shewing himself as the Saviour ; oh ! glorious day and ever memorable event, enough to swallow us up in adorable admiration, to behold all of a piece, all majesty, and all simplicity, that the ages of the world might see and learn the lowly way, wherein the majesty of Heaven chose, to sound forth the everlasting gospel, saying unto the poor waterwoman

with her pitcher, “ woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, &c. but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (*John iv.*)

He that could not err, was not mistaken in the woman (though a sinner ;) she appeared to be weary of sin, and looking for redemption, as appears by how ready she was to converse about the soul’s concerns, and about the Saviour, which being so ready in her mouth, shews that it was very near the heart ; especially, when we observe, what a transport of joy the appearance of a Saviour was unto her, that she left (as if she forgot) her pitcher, even her present errand, and ran to call her acquaintance, saying, “ come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did,” (or brought her sins to remembrance,) “ is not this the Christ ?” oh ! that we were wise, that we could learn by such a lesson as is here set forth ; not only as respects the simplicity of the glorious gospel of God our Saviour ; but as it concerns us all, with regard to a state of mind prepared to receive it ; even that we beware of indifferency or lukewarmness, in a concern of such unspeakable importance, but that we believe, and be in good earnest, and Christ would do all the rest.

And seeing that Christ is come, (for I only address such as profess to believe in him,) and that he is, and hath done, all that the Scriptures saith of him, even to redeem his people, and set them free, and have called them off from all the rudiments, even of the law, to which they had been in bondage, which was added because of transgression, until Christ came; see *Galatians*, iii. and now, those called christians, profess to believe that he is come, and that they should obey and follow him out of all, even as fully as Israel followed Moses out of Egypt, yea, they profess to believe more of him, than Israel did of Moses, even that he is the Lord from Heaven, the quickening spirit, who should be heard in all things, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given.

Seeing that we profess to believe in such great and precious promises, as of the heavenly possession of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ; yet after all that hath been done for us, if we still make light of the mercies of God, and set them at nought, or for some covetous self-end, or earthly usage or accommodation, join in with any part of the manners of the Heathen, or of the Jews, (from whom we have been called out,) should we not then, be far more inexcusable than Israel under the law? who suffered such sore vengeance, for turning aside (from the commandment given by Moses, after the ways of the Chaldees, from whence

Abraham was called out? or the ways of Egypt, from whence Moses led them?

I say, should we not be far more guilty than they were, if while we say, and preach, that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse? and that Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law? and say, that if we be circumcised, Christ should profit us nothing; and while we say, that whoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace, (and so fallen from Christ;) read *Galatians* and *Colossians*, &c. I say, that if after all such high profession, we should now be found going with our bullock, ram, kid, or other offering, to be offered as our sacrifice, or should we be found taking a child to be circumcised, or keep their passover, or any other of their ceremonies, would it not be cried out against as barefaced idolatry? and a downright denying of Christ, the one blessed sacrifice, who should perfect forever them that are sanctified, and abolish the ordinances of the law that was against us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross? (*Ephesians*, ii. *Colossians*, ii.) So we may see, that they who touch, taste, or handle the ceremonies of the law, deny the coming of Christ by their works.

And yet so it is, that we see all these things done in effect, even as by wholesale, and that by professed Christians; so that they who so deny Christ by their works, seem not to know what they do at this day, no more than the

Jews knew, who cried "crucify him," when they saw that he should end their temple, tythes, and priesthood ; but now they who profess him, would still keep up the Jewish tythes, as stiff as if he had never yet come to end them ; and so in effect, still uphold the whole law ; for tythes were a main support of all their rituals ; therefore, whoever claims tythes, pleads for all the formalities of the Mosaic institution ; or else for what would be still worse, that is, to claim the price without giving account why or wherefore they make such a charge.

And if my limits would allow, I might shew that tythes were a main part of the Jewish rituals, even as may often be observed ; that when the Jews were charged with neglecting the performance of the law, the Lord saith "ye have robbed me in tythes and offerings," so there we see tythes the chief thing noted in the law ; inso-much that if the withholding of them, was such robbery in that dispensation, does it not argue to the same amount on the side of the gospel, if now we withhold from Christ, the glory due unto his name, as the complete offering, of which tythes have been a lively figure from the days of Abraham, until Christ fulfilled and ended them by a heavenly offering, by which all that are now sanctified, have their spiritual acceptable offerings presented without spot ; even by him their heavenly high priest, made higher than the heavens, and of course, made higher than the earthly hire-

ling ; and we had all need to take heed, that we bring our spiritual offerings to that heavenly high priest, even to God, who is a spirit, and is seeking for spiritual offerings : but they who serve the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof, cannot read those things, neither can they see the curse, that lieth upon them that will not come to Christ, to have their affections and lusts crucified, and in such the life liveth, which crucified the Lord of glory.

Some may say, that it is the state, which allots or appoints the payment of the tythes at this day, and not the priest that claims them ; I say then, let such a state answer for what they do ; for if it be a gospel state, could any thing more flatly contradict their own profession, than to institute, and uphold, even the mainspring of all legal rituals, while they pretend to believe in Christ, whose coming was to fulfil, and be the end thereof ? who saith, “not at Jerusalem,” which was the place to which such offerings appertained, and he is the sum and substance and end of all, yea, as the stone cut out without hands, that should smite, overturn, and break to pieces, all other power and dominion, not only of sin and unbelief ; but also, of all rule and authority, until he should have subdued all unto his own blessed dominion, and raised it over all in the whole earth.

But now it seems, they will not allow that it could be done without hands, seeing that they

appoint such vast multitudes of hands, and pay them dear for cutting it out, yea, and many strange devices they have carved, invented, and contrived, to corrupt from the simplicity which is in Christ; even far outstripping all that ever we read, of carpenters, smiths, and curious artists of the heathen Idolators, as may be seen by the piles of contradictory volumes which they have written for many ages, ever since the Christian profession had been turned into a trade to make money, by such as did not believe Him, who saith, that no man could know him but by his own revelation: yet alas! what incalculable revenues hath been allotted throughout Christendom, to uphold the main root of unbelief, yea, to set up and uphold, high priests, and high places, as the fountain of Christian knowledge, although John saith, that the Son of God is come, and hath-given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; yet, behold how they have despised his knowledge, as if Christ was not sufficient to qualify and send forth his own servants, as he did in the Apostles' days: but they who would make money of it, set about to qualify men for that purpose, just as they would qualify a company of lawyers, such as withstood the Lord in the days of his appearance amongst men.

And such have been paid many millions, those ages past, to persuade the people, that he is not so risen, or come, to give the understanding,

but that the people must pay them for it, or it cannot be had; and so they despise the Lord in spirit, as the Jews did his body, for now the most honourable counsellor among them, (who is best and most sincerely disposed,) seems still to think, that his knowledge may be honourably interred in such a tomb as he had hewn out for himself; and there they would keep watch upon him for ages; and millions have been paid them, for persuading the people that he is not risen (to give the understanding of him that is true,) but that they have all the understanding still among themselves, for to deal it out as they please, and still they think it an honour done him, to have his knowledge laid in such a tomb as they have hewn out for themselves; for they knew not his habitation in the Heavens, therefore, they deny that understanding which the Son of God giveth, (or would give, even of his holy spirit to them that ask him) while they affect to deal out that knowledge themselves; and so they ascribe the progress of the gospel unto the millions which hath been paid to uphold high priests and high places, instead of ascribing it to the Son of God, who is come, a light into the world, and saith, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life; yet behold what vast sums hath been paid, for to persuade the people not so to believe in him or in his light, but to come to them, who were in the grave of death and darkness, and have neither light nor life to

give with their knowledge. And therefore, have not the blasphemy of such, exceeded all that ever went before them, seeing that they still ascribe all the fame, glory, and success of the gospel, to their own corrupt devices and exertions; while in very deed, such have been the greatest obstruction that ever Satan yet cast up against it?

Have they not taken the money for saying, in effect, that the understanding of the Son of God is not risen, but that his disciples came by night and stole it away, and transferred it to them, who are still in their graves; so that now, death and darkness, talks of life and light; yet nevertheless, after all they have done against him, a remnant can set to their seal, that the Lord is risen indeed, and his angel rolled away the reproach, wherewith they have reproached him, and his own remnant do know that he is come, even as the Scripture saith, by the spirit which he hath given them, by which he openeth their understanding, so that their hearts have burned within them, as he appeareth unto them, and openeth the Scriptures in his own heavenly way, whereby he is setting up his kingdom in the hearts of tens of thousands; who is the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and the seed in which all nations is blessed.

And that is He, who hath been on his way in the hearts of the people, blessed be his name, to whom the glory and the good speed of the gospel

is to be all ascribed, and not to the high priests, for they know not that way; it is hid from their eyes, because they would ascribe the fame thereof to themselves, and to their philosophy and vain deceit, for the sake of gain, or for the praise of men. And are not such like unto the priests of Baal, (if not far worse,) by whom the Lord hath been dishonoured and provoked to jealousy, and by whom death and darkness hath been spread over the nations, even while they talk of life and light? and is not that the thing, which corrupteth the earth, (even knowledge without life,) as it corrupted Adam, and drove him out from the presence of God? for it is only life that keeps sweet and pure, but in death there is rottenness, stink, and corruption, even though they should have never such store of knowledge to feed upon.

And all the above woful degeneracy (and much more than I could mention,) had been foretold, and clearly pointed out, in many prophecies of the apostles, wherein they warned and forewarned the believers, of the workings of the mystery of iniquity, which they clearly described, in many extraordinary significant terms, such as, Antichrist, and the son of perdition, &c. which deceitful workers, as being out of the living faith, and spirit of Christ, should work into a form of godliness, and for self-ends through covetousness, should corrupt, pervert, and betray the cause of the gospel (like Judas,

who also is called the son of perdition, betrayed the Lord for money) even to such a woful extent, that they spoke, as if thereby, the mystery of iniquity should spread far and wide, and that the consequence should be sad indeed.

All those things, appear to be so clearly and accurately foretold ; that if the most wretched unbeliever in the world, should but take time and pains to examine whether these things were so, even whether all the woful falling away and apostacy, which the apostles foretold should overspread the churches, have been fulfilled, I say, that a retrospect, even of such striking events, might be enough to convince the most obstinate infidel, only let him examine impartially, and without prejudice ; but there is one sort of infidel that would not be convinced, that is, the practical infidel, who professes the truth of the gospel, and yet sells it for money or some worldly gratification.

And seeing that those things came to pass, even such sad and gloomy times ; just as had been foretold by the Lord's holy prophets and apostles ; is there not then abundant cause for to lift up the head in hope, seeing also, that as sure as had been foretold, that a woful night should overtake the churches (which began even in the apostles' days) (see *John* iv. &c.) We are also abundantly assured, that a bright day shall succeed, which is largely testified unto in Revelations, (xiv. xv. & xxi. chap. &c.)

even that the Lord would (in his own time) arise, and be avenged of those things, which had prevailed, to bring his pure truth into bondage, to the dishonour of his ever adorable name; and seeing that, not only the Lord's judgments hath been made manifest, but that even the glorious day spoken of, hath dawned, unto thousands, far above what the carnal man could conceive.

Therefore, seeing that those things came to pass in their season, who art thou then that would say, that the Lord should be slack concerning his promise, but that all, whether nations or individuals, that will not bow unto the appearance of the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne, in whose light the nations of them that are saved must walk? and if so be, that they bow not unto his light and grace, as made manifest in the conscience, so as to be led and redeemed out of the spirit and lusts of this world, and by him that giveth the true understanding, to have their ways ordered before him, conformable to his will, in the day of his mercy; which if they reject, shall they not be amazed with his judgments, which are sure to overtake, and be terrible to all the workers of iniquity, when the beast, horns and all, should be cast into the lake of his wrath? yea, all that appertains to the beast, of what appearance soever, yea, even though it should have horns like a lamb, and appear ever so mild, yet

if it be of the nature of the beast, the wrath of God will be against it, for it is the nature he looks to (as he looks at the heart,) and if that be not changed, the likeness will not save from the stroke, for the Lord will not always suffer the nations to dwell at ease and secure in their sins, seeing, that if they could partake of their hearts' desire that way, it would be the greatest woe or curse, that could befall mankind.

The prophecies in the Revelations are so marvellously clear, and the things therein declared, so exactly answering to that which came to pass, that we may be ready to say, that if the apostle John had lived unto this day, and had been writing accounts of all that occurred these eighteen hundred years, he could not have recorded such great events, (many of which have come to pass) in a clearer, or more comprehensive manner, than they are set forth in the Revelations ; and there we find, that the christian churches, are charged with having the doctrine of Balaam and of Jezebel, long after old Balaam had been slain with the sword, and long after the dogs had eaten old Jezebel.

I mention this, to remind the reader, that it is no ways inconsistent with scripture, for to make an allusion to Baal or Balaam, at this day, for Jezebel (who John saith, taught in a christian church,) is set forth as the chief promoter of the house of Baal ; and by the

church being charged with the doctrine of Balaam, we may observe, that it is his life and his ways, which are pointed out as being so abominable, while we have a large sample of his good words and fair speeches ; and what is there that could exceed them ? but what then, he went after this world in his desires and affections, the joining with which, is called fornication &c. and so he laid stumbling-blocks in the way of the people, by causing them to be partakers therein ; for while his heart went after covetousness, his good words only tended to make him so much the more dangerous.

And in process of time, professed Christians fell away into the very same thing, though under quite another name, and in a different manner, while as yet there was no difference in the thing itself ; and that is the thing, which I mean to point out a little further in the following section, by referring more particularly, to a few of the precepts and examples recorded in the New Testament ; but have no view of arguing cases, or any thing further, than simply to spread the subject a little into view, in order that we may carefully look how far those things concern us in the present day.

I shall conclude this section, with a caution, to beware of despising or condemning these remarks, because they fall so vastly short of setting forth those things in a way suitable to the magnitude of the occasion ; remembering, that neither

the brevity I aim at, nor yet the weakness of my capacity, would allow me to do justice to such weighty considerations; therefore, I shall only recommend them to the conscience of the intelligent reader, who may somewhat make up for that wherein I have been deficient, especially in those things which may be better felt (or conceived,) than expressed or testified of, in word or writing.

SECTION II.

Some further serious Reflections upon the iniquity of Covetousness, shewing, that the people hath been emboldened therein, by the evil example of many, who are esteemed their chief leaders, whose fruits shew, that they are so woefully degenerated from the spirit, life, and practice, of the Apostles and primitive Christians, as now to be found going after and promoting that very same Covetousness, which the Apostles testified against, as Idolatry, and the root of all evil; out of which, unrighteousness doth spring up and flourish, while they cast the stumbling-block of Iniquity before the people, yea, even while they profess to sow unto righteousness, and expect to reap of mercy, while (through the deceivableness of unrighteousness or covetousness,) judgment may be springing up like hemlock, though they know it not, because they would not know it, until the measure of such Iniquity be filled up, as bringeth the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, or even upon nations that partake of their sins (and strike hands therein,) they may also receive of their plagues or judgments; as may be seen exemplified, even by the late overturnings in many parts of Europe.

THAT which I shall now endeavour to bring a little further into view, hath often been so

largely spoken to, that it may now be said, what could I say which hath not been already said? yea, and testified unto, in far more powerful language than any feeble remarks which I may have to offer; yet that may not excuse me, although it should be called an old worn out tale; and that I might be told, that there is writing enough, and who is there to read it, and that the world is full of instruction, but who will take heed thereto; yet I believe this is a subject, on which we must not be silent until the evil be removed, or until the Lord shall cease to plead with the nations on that account, and determine to plead with them only in judgment, and until then, I believe that we should not hold our peace, but even cry aloud against the evil of covetousness; and especially, so long as it prevails amongst the pastors or teachers of the people.

And moreover I may tell them, that they could not hear a more doleful report, than that they should be pleaded with no more (while in their present state;) and that it should be said, they are joined to their idols, let them alone, which would be sad tidings indeed: but I desire, with all the fervency of my soul and spirit, that it may not yet be come to such a woful pass, as that they should be quite let alone; yet I am not without my fears, even on that account, though fain would I cherish a hope, that there is still some good thing in them, and striving with them, and my desires are, that it may not be in vain, though

their day seems very far spent, and their light becoming darkness, yea, blackness, in the heavens thereof.

Wherefore then should any marvel if I use plainness of speech ; for how could I come forward in such a cause, with an unjust measure, or a bag of deceitful weights ; howbeit, I feel it to be a great and sore cause of heaviness and discouragement, that some of those which I mean to address, would not be persuaded by any language, seeing that covetousness doth so darken the mind, as that men should not know what it is ; yea, that the god of this world doth so blind the mind, that they could not discern or distinguish the difference between the covetous and such as had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, although by manifestation of the truth, they should commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God ; alas ! what language could reach or arouse those, that make a high profession of Christ, and with all fair speeches, cry up the scriptures, and the self denying lives and labours of the apostles, while they seem not to care (or to understand,) how vastly different their own views and pursuits are from those they so extol in words, while by their works they deny them ?

So it was among the Jews ; the Pharisees which were covetous (while yet looking for the Messiah) derided the Lord himself (*Luke* xvi. 14.) so that covetousness may be called the god of this world, which so blinded the Pharisees, and bound them

up in such a chain of darkness ; that with all their knowledge, and profession of waiting for the Messiah, they seemed the furthest off from knowing him when he appeared ; insomuch, that in them we have many striking examples, to what a pitch of darkness, covetousness, which is idolatry, (whereby the god of this world is bowed unto,) not only blindeth the mind, binding it under a chain of darkness, but also, causeth the wrath of God to come upon the children of disobedience.

If it should be queried, who are the children of disobedience ? the answer might be given in a two-fold sense ; yet, here it may suffice to notice the most simple and distant acceptation of the word ; seeing that the children of disobedience know not of what generation they are, no more than the Jews, who would say, “ we be Abraham’s seed ;” but now let us leave that, (although it be the sum of all) and only call them children by profession ; who make a high profession of Christ and of the scriptures, but live in disobedience unto both. This may appear a severe reflection, but the day of trial will soon overtake us all, wherein our obedience will be tried at a righteous tribunal ; and if we rebel against the light of Christ in our own conscience (of which the scriptures testify,) and do not believe or walk therein, it will be our condemnation, and then, the fashion of the times we lived in, would be a miserable apology, for having yielded ourselves as servants of sin unto death, instead of obedience unto righ-

téousness ; for his servants ye are whom ye obey, not whom ye profess to obey, so that it is possible to profess Christ, and obey Satan, which is the worst sort of treachery ; yea, even as bad as an avowed enemy ; for in the world, a traitor is counted dangerous as an open enemy, and even more hateful.

But how awful is that state, which betrays the truth, either for the gain, honour, or friendship of this world ; while such may be the least likely to know what they do ? which is still more dreadful, when the influence of custom sweeps them down the torrent into the dead sea ; oh ! the influence of custom, when it runs according to the desire of the flesh, and of the human heart, which is deceitful above all things ; and may it not still be said, that surely the customs of the people are vain, and will be vain, so long as the god of this world is served ? or in other words, so long as professed Christians serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own bellies (or a desire to feed on the world's esteem,) even while they may be crying, Lord ! Lord ! by many external performances ? yet if they do not the thing that he commands, are they not children of disobedience ? and how should he own them, as their God and Saviour (while in such a state) who said, I receive not honour from men ; so that there is an honour, like that which men give one to another, but Christ will have none of that honour while the world is their god ; for if

any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him?

Christ must have the whole heart or he will have none, yet not the deceitful heart; so here is the touchstone and true criterion. The Lord will have nothing but his own, even that which he creates anew unto good works; who saw every thing that he made, and behold it was very good; and when he came into the world to redeem lost man out of evil, he said, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and warned us to beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing, while inward they are ravening wolves, but by their fruits ye shall know them, for men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.

Now behold the criterion which is set before us, not only for our government but warning also; and as it is just and righteous, so it is a solemn rule; there we may see, that the clothing, the profession, the name or title will deceive, be it never so exactly like the sheep's clothing; yea though the chair of dignity should be never so highly esteemed amongst men; yet that is nothing to us, unless we know them by their fruits, so let none deceive himself, and say, how dare I to question such as are esteemed the true sheep of Christ's fold; but let us rather say, how dare we to question or make light of our Lord's command; and God hath said, beware of them that come to you in sheep's clothing, and by their fruits ye shall know them; so then it is plain, that if we take

things upon trust, we are not keeping the commandments of Christ, who commands us to beware of men, and to know them by their fruits; and not as an uncertain or indifferent matter, but a positive injunction “ye shall know them by their fruits,” (*Matthew* vii, 16) oh! how safe, and how simple are the leadings of Christ the good shepherd, while the ways of men are wound up in an endless labyrinth of confusion, whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; and who are enemies to his cross, whose end will be according to their works; except they repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; for the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth and from under heaven.

And thus I would propose a few plain serious considerations, for us to weigh and consider, especially at this time, when we are favoured with a cessation from beholding the horrors of war, (which is also the fruit of covetousness or lust;) and seeing that the fermentation of the ocean of iniquity occasioned thereby, is somewhat allayed, may we not now at such a season, crave a moment of solid reflection; for the present day seems loudly to call upon us, to look what we are about; yea, all around us (besides what has happened to neighbouring nations) is a loud call, if we could but hear the rod and him that appointeth it: and although I did not mean to advert to

any particular case, yet there is one which I cannot well pass by unnoticed ; and that is the amazing quantity of human misery which stares us in the face, enough to make the hardest heart to ache ; even now in this time of peace and plenty.

So that all together, there is abundance even without us, for to cause us to look within, that our time should not slip over, without taking heed to the light in our consciences, which Christ giveth, that with it we may see, whether we have not yet sins, from which we should break off, if happily the Lord may grant us repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, rather than that we should now settle down in a state of carnal ease and self-security ; and so be lulled to sleep as upon the top of a mast or on the brink of a precipice ; and seeing that sin draweth down such signal vengeance upon guilty nations, what must it do upon the soul, when time to us here is at an end ? and when even the wasting of time in a way that men deem most harmless, may be carried to account against us, and be found a burthen too grievous to be borne ? oh ! then the fashion of this world which passeth away, will be no shelter from the judgment of God, which is according to truth ; neither would the height of our profession be able to hide us from the wrath of Him that sitteth upon the throne.

And seeing that our highly favoured nation, not only makes a high profession of the scriptures, but hath been also blessed with many choice (ma

we not say rare) and peculiar privileges ; so it was with the Jews ; let us therefore fear, lest we let them slip, and lest that which was designed as the choicest blessing, should be turned into a curse, and rise up as a condemnation against us ; and although our own backslidings should draw down upon us, judgment after judgment, such as have fallen upon neighbouring nations in our day ; yet how light would it all be (though tenfold repeated) compared with that hardness of heart, and darkness, whereby the god of this world blindeth the mind ? oh ! then how doth it behove all ranks and classes, high and low, rich and poor, to bring their deeds to the light, that so we may be favoured to see whether they are wrought in God. yea or nay ? and moreover, that many high professors of the christian name, had need to look, whether they worship idols more than the living and true God and Saviour ; and though all sorts or classes of the people may be deeply concerned therein, yea, as much so as even the teachers themselves, yet I mean principally to apply the following remarks to the teachers ; in order that I may speak more to the point, and that by pointing at them, the people might be reminded to look to themselves and beware of covetousness from which proceeds many of the evils which abound in the world ; and I may also hint at some of those evils, showing them to be the offspring of covetousness, which is called idolatry ; and we are admonished to let no man deceive us with vain

words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. (*Eph. v. 6. Col. iii. 5. 6.*)

Now I come to notice in the first place, how evident and notorious it is, that many who are called ministers of the gospel, and bishops, are not without covetousness, but that therein, some have so far exceeded all bounds, that of them it may be said, these great ones have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds asunder; and if any should ask how that is to be proved? they may be answered, that their fruits doth make it manifest, insomuch that it may be asked, who is he that can take a view thereof, and of the evil influence of their example in the world) without horror and amazement? ah! woe is me for their sake, whereunto shall I compare such a state, or what is it like? look at it any way, and say, if a monster with many heads could appear more wonderful? and yet it is no more than the apostles foretold should come to pass.

Yea, they have described those things so clear, and with such exactness, that we need no stronger outward evidence, or proof, for a confirmation of the reality, clearness, and efficacy of the gospel, than the fulfilment of the apostles' prophecies which have taken place, even enough to convince the most obstinate infidel; insomuch, that those great Rabbis of the later ages, who had been praised up to the skies for their great writings and eloquence, in (pretence of) defending the gospel, and

to confute infidelity ; I say, if they had only honesty enough, to have referred the poor infidel to the apostles' prophecies, and to bid him compare, how exactly they have been fulfilled in themselves, who aspiring to the rank of great bishops and prelates, with their fruits, have spread such darkness over the nations, that like the smoke out of the pit they have darkened the spiritual atmosphere, so exactly as foretold by the apostles, that to have referred the infidel to such a proof, might seem more convincing than all the miracles which the apostles wrought, so that these great ones, who have been so highly exalted and extolled for the multitude of crafty, flowery, contradictory volumes, which they have written to convince the infidel (even while they wofully corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ) ; I say, they might have spared themselves such great ado ; as one leaf, referring the infidel, to compare how exactly the false teachers of the latter ages, agree with the declarations predicted by the apostles, might be more convincing than all that ever they yet said or wrote, for which they have got millions of money, and great titles like the princes of this world.

All of which, though clean contrary to the precepts and example of the apostles, yet what they clearly foretold and declared should come to pass ; the recital of which, would swell these remarks far beyond what I have in view, and on which I should be tender of enlarging, and more

especially, as many of them may be applicable to the state of all people in general, yet it may be needful here to instance a few passages, to revive the subject, or rather to set in order before us, how early the mystery of iniquity began to work, as declared by the apostles ; but what I shall here set forth, may only be considered as a speck here and there, or as the head of a chapter, whereby the reader may be reminded to look further, where he may behold it abundantly enlarged in his own observation,

The love of money, which is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith (i *Timothy*, vi) ; and thus the god of this world so wofully blinded the mind, that (in process of time) many became estranged from the true fear, light, life, and heavenly power and truth of God, which the Apostles and true believers witnessed, tasted, and handled, of the word of life which is with God, whereby (through many grievous persecutions,) the sound and fame of the glorious gospel was spread through nations far and wide ; but while Satan's kingdom was thus shaken, he sets on his agents or ministers, (who loved to have the pre-eminence,) to withstand the work of the Lord, insomuch, that even in the apostles' time they began to shew themselves, as the apostle John said, that many Anti-Christ's were even then come, and that such as loved to the have pre-eminence withstood him ; and here let us take notice by the way, that such as

love to have the pre-eminence are the ministers of Satan or of Antichrist, (let them pretend never so much humility,) but they that are the Lord's servants in the truth, desire that Christ in all things should have the pre-eminence.

Jude saith, that they had crept in unawares, who run greedily after the error of Balaam for rewards, &c. even such whose mouths speak great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage; sensual, not having the spirit; such speak evil of dignities, who know not the glorious heavenly dignity which Christ set up, who saith, that the princes of the gentiles and their great ones exercise dominion and authority; but that it should not be so amongst you; and be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; neither be ye called masters; and call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven. (See *Matthew* xx. 25 and xxiii. 8. 9. 10. *Luke* xxii. 25. 26.) The dignity of which heavenly order, such as were sensual, not having the spirit, (yet loved to have the pre-eminence) could not abide, it is foolishness unto them.

Peter saith, "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you;

whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not," &c. (2. *Peter*, ii. 1. 2. 3.) There we may see, that while they made a high profession of Christ, yet for filthy lucre sake, by their works they denied the Lord that bought them, while with feigned words, through covetousness, they made merchandize of the poor flocks, whom they did not spare.

Even as Paul foretold the Ephesians, on taking his last farewell of them, saying in *Acts*, xx. "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" so he warned them to watch, commending them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build up and give an inheritance among all the sanctified; referring them also to his own example, saying, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities;" which plainly sheweth, that even in the Apostle's own time, his strongest fears were the effects of covetousness; so he reminds them to remember how he ceased not to warn them with tears night and day by the space of three years: and to the Corinthians he saith, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ,"

even as he saith to Titus, that men taught things they ought not, for filthy lucre sake.

But I must forbear to recite many passages of Scripture, and need not have quoted even these, (only to set the nature of the subject in order before us,) seeing that we may observe, in each Book and Epistle throughout the New Testament, admonitions, warnings, and prophecy, of a great apostacy or falling away from the light, life, spirit, truth, government, and order, which the apostles lived in (and laboured to bring people unto), in place whereof, they speak of a structure, likeness, or image of what the apostles wrought by the power of Christ ; insonmuch that it would usurp the name and profession while in quite a different spirit, as the fruits thereof made clearly manifest (just as foretold by the apostles), when in process of time, this monster threw off the mask, or rather that all their paint, art, or gilding, could not conceal the cheat ; for although the god of this world so blinded the mind, that they knew not what spirit they were of, yet the babe in the light, could see with the single eye, how that in process of time, it was man that came to be exalted and extolled, even while they pretended to exalt the Lord, who declared that his kingdom is not of this world : and now who would dare to say that they were his disciples, who set up an order and goverment which he told his followers should not be among them ; and such as Peter saith, through covetousness with feigned words, shall

make merchandize of you, by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of, whose judgment lingereth not.

And what sorer judgment could befall them, than to have the mind blinded by the god of this world, and so be given over to covetousness which is idolatry, and unto a desire of being lords over God's heritage? all which is of the serpent, who tempted Eve to covet and aspire after forbidden knowledge, for a purpose of self-exaltation, wanting to be gods; and thus unbelief got entrance, so as not to believe the Lord who said,—in the day ye partake thereof, ye shall surely die.

And even as by sin, death entered into the world, so also as iniquity did abound, the love of many waxed cold; and being left destitute of the fruits of the spirit, they betook themselves to be supplied with such fruit as their soul coveted after; and first of all, the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which brings the soul under death, and hiding from the presence of God, who is light; for all that do evil hate the light; and if the light which is in us become darkness, how great is that darkness? and how inexpressibly great was the darkness which overtook those, whose mind the god of this world had blinded, may stand a signal monument of warning unto all, whether individuals, societies, or nations? that while we have the light we may take heed thereunto, and believe in it, and walk in the light, lest darkness overtake us; and all sorts of people are equally

concerned herein, for however different the temptation may be, the prince of darkness, the tempter and deceiver, is sure to suit his bait according to our circumstance, weakness, or propensity; and if we despise God's marvellous light, which is offered as his salvation to the ends of the earth, even Christ within, the hope of glory, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, which not only manifests the great deceit of the heart, of sin, and of all unrighteousness, but also grants the unspeakable gift of repentance, with power to forsake all evil, and even to draw nigh unto God in the full assurance of faith, through the drawings of the Father, who with the holy spirit, is one God over all blessed for ever more; and he alone it is, which leads into sweet harmony with the scriptures.

And seeing that we are encompassed about, with such clear manifestation of the judgments and mercies of God, and the glorious light of his son; how should we escape if we neglect so great salvation, and refuse him that speaketh from heaven? who would shake all in that can be shaken, and burn up all our chaff and dross, yea, all the proud, and all that do wickedly, should be burned up, by his own heavenly baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire; the axe being laid to the root of the corrupt tree, which unbounded and unmerited mercies, if we should despise them, and follow lying vanities, it will not serve as an excuse, for to say, that the serpent beguiled me, or to say, that men deceived me,

and I was deceived ; for now the same cause produce the like effects as ever ; and although many ways there be, of being deceived, yet all-deceit is of the serpent, and Christ who is the truth, the light, and the life, is able, not only to discover him, but to bruise Satan under our feet ; and that which is written, is for our instruction and correction in righteousness ; and that which has happened of the righteous judgments of God, should be for our warning and admonition, that we should not lust, or covet, as they also lusted

But to return to the evident fulfilment of many of the apostles' prophecies respecting the fruits and effects of covetousness, it is with reluctance that I should enlarge upon those expressions, that may be needful for to convey a shade of the subject, any ways adequate to do it the least degree of justice, therefore I shall try to make it short, and get rid of it quick as I can ; and as it would be tedious to enumerate the many inventions, which were sought out, and set up by that same fallen wisdom and subtlety, which said unto Eve, ye shall not surely die, but shall be as gods knowing good and evil ; so there is the upshot ; desiring to be as gods, the god of this world blinded the mind, and so the evil eye came to be opened as the apostles saith, " I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ ;" 2 Cor. xi. 3. and so it came to pass, that being corrupted from the sim-

plicity, a door came to be opened for those, who, as Peter saith, “ have the heart exercised in covetous practices, (ii. *Peter* 2.) even such as he foretold, should through covetousness with feigned words make merchandize of the poor flocks ; and a sad merchandize they drove, aiming at being lords over God’s heritage, being such as loved to have the pre-eminence, and wrought so far in the mystery of iniquity, that in process of time, they made a sad prey of the flocks, which began to work ; even while the Lord’s heavenly labourers and valiant soldiers, whose weapons were not carnal but mighty through God ; by whose mighty power and spirit, the truth was spread far and near, even in the face of cruel mockings, tortures, and persecution unto death ; until even kings and potentates of the earth, acknowledged the truth which they proclaimed, and made profession of the same.

And then a way was opened for that spirit to get exalted, which loved the chief seat in the synagogues, and to be called of men rabbi ; and so, to make the reputation of the christian name, the means of their own aggrandizement in the the world, passing all bounds therein, not only becoming great as the princes of this world, but could practice the same sort of craft and dissimulation, for the purpose of attaining unto that anti-christian pre-eminence, even as the great men of the earth practiced, in scrambling for what is called preferment or promotion in the world : but

their fruits manifested what spirit they were of; proceeding from bad to worse, yea, so blind, void of all shame, and such a pitch of darkness came over them, as even to set up what they called the Crusades, and so devised schemes, to extend the christian religion in the world, by the means of fire and sword; which some of their historians, as sottish as themselves, have called by the name of the holy wars: and so war was set up as a virtue, by them that professed to follow the Prince of Peace.

It is reported of Mahomet, that he extended his dominion by means of the sword, but I do not know whether those antichristian monsters followed the example of Mahomet, or whether Mahomet followed their example, yet that makes no matter, as it may suffice to know, that it was all for the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; but it never was of Christ, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them; and all, who go about to father such works of darkness upon Christ, as the fruits of a true christian spirit, are of those that Peter said, would, through covetousness, with feigned words make merchandize of the flocks, by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of.

Was ever greater cause given, for the glorious gospel and name of Christ to be evil spoken of, than by such horrible works, which caused their deeds to stink, even among the heathen? insomuch

that it may now be queried, whether there be any part of the world wherein the christian name is more abhorred, than in some of those parts called the Holy Land? wherein so much blood had been shed and deceit practised, under the name of fighting for the gospel of peace and truth, or as they called it, for the cross of Christ.

Could any thing be more pleasing to the devil (the father of all such horrible doings), than to see the christian name made such a shew of, and put to such open shame in the sight of the heathen? and it was no marvel that such leaders of the people should cause them to err, and run into many strange inventions and extremes, even to torment their bodies and that of their flocks, like the worshippers of Baal; as if they had forgot, that Satan would have men's bodies tormented and the soul too; and he cared not, if the body was dishonoured and destroyed, while the lust was saved alive; and so, would work by his agents whom he blindeth by the god of this world, as is said unto Timothy, while some coveted after money they erred from the faith; and how exceedingly did some err from the faith, who substituted cruel bodily exercise, which profiteth little, in place of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; even as the Lord upbraided the Pharisees and Scribes, saying, that "laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things do ye" (*Mark, ix.*)

and yet, how much more inexcusable were those than the Scribes and Pharisees.

But the mercies of God endureth forever ; and let generations tell it unto their children's children, that in the ages to come, it may be mentioned among the living evidences of the care of the good shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep, that all the combined powers of darkness, even the dragon, the whore, the beast, and the false prophet, were not able to pluck his own sheep out of his hand ; yea, he it was who is stronger than all, and through all, reserved a seed unto himself, even from among that people, which he sustained by his own invisible power ; although hidden from, or not known by the world, neither by the wisdom thereof, except sometimes to cast a flood of reproach or persecution after them, charging them with innovation, heresy, and all manner of evil.

And they were not a few, who at sundry times (at the peril of liberty and life), bore a testimony for the Lord, against the pomp and corruption of hierarchy, and (although there were a few learned among them) they were for the most part, persons of small account in the world, such as mechanics, and some women ; which may be told, to the praise of the providence, power, and glory of God ; who is still choosing the weak things of the world to confound the things that appear mighty : and it is remarkable, that though such were often derided and abused in their lifetime, yet even a few of those were viewed rather different

after death, and even some that they owned, testified against their ways. It is reported that a woman named Bridget, declared against their ways, and reproved them so severely, as to say, "that the prelates, bishops, and priests, are the cause why the doctrine of Christ is neglected, and almost extinct ; that the clergy have turned the ten commandments of God into two words, which signify give money," and prophesied, that "the see of the pope should be thrown down in the deep like a millstone;" still they would call her a prophetess or saint, while they lived in the crimes which she cried against.

And here let it be observed, that from amongst those sprang the reformation, and not through the heathen nor the Jews, did that great light shine forth at that day ; but the Lord had regard to the cry of his own oppressed seed, which cried unto him for deliverance in the souls of many amongst professed Christians, who could not rest day nor night under the bondage of corruption : and the Lord regarded the travail of their souls (being his own blessed work begotten therein), and sent forth his light and his truth, whereby with his day spring from on high, he again visited the benighted nations of Europe, so that a noble stand was made, not only against the avarice, pride, and pomp of the prelates, but also against many of their rites and ceremonies ; which were become more like heathen idolatry, or Jewish traditions, than ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ ; and as that light proved an

unspeakable blessing to the nations, so it might also be called a blessing, even to them, from amongst whom those in the light were called out, wherein the long suffering and tender mercies of the Lord were manifested, yea, and his judgments were also made manifest, insomuch that it may be queried, (seeing what he did for his people to the praise of his grace,) what is it that he would not have done for them, had they abode faithful unto Him who saved them in the day of distress, when they trusted in him, and were little and low in their own eyes, while many were faithful unto death, and received the crown of life?

But alas! alas! what soon followed after? or rather, what is it that began to work, to eclipse that glorious light, even while it was only well begun to dawn? that is the whole burthen, the sum, and the substance of what I am now feebly endeavouring to set forth, insomuch that the foregoing remarks were designed only as a preface, or necessary introduction, for to spread the subject in order before us.

Howbeit I am aware, that it may be to no more purpose then that of calling to the deaf adder, seeing that they have all along been warned, and their revoltings testified against at times, since the days of Edward; not merely by such feeble worms as me, but also by many dignified instruments, against whom they have not only hardened themselves and stopped the ear, but often cast out reproaches after them, calling them

turbulent, rude, vulgar, factious, &c. saying all manner of evil against them ; but as for me, I can expect to do no more than slightly to glance at their ways, and (as it were) to set foot here and there.

Although the contemplation of the times of reformation, should warm the heart, and fill the soul with gratitude, for that marvellous display of forbearance, loving kindness, power, and providence of Almighty God ; yet, on viewing the revival which took place in those days of heavenly visitation, we are reminded of the depths of Satan ; how that he appeared in the field at the very first dawn ; and (as if he had seen his kingdom in danger), opposed all the powers of darkness to the spreading of the light ; and what he could not effect by persecution, was wondrously soon brought about, by holding out the old bait ; that is to say, the kingdoms of this world, and the glory and reputation thereof ; and that was quickly taken ; it would seem almost as greedily as Judas took it, though with less remorse, although they might have been warned, not only by his example, but by the example of many about them ; but what could warn, or stop the career of such as were greedy of filthy lucre, or open that eye which the god of this world had blinded ?

So that now they began to carry all (as it were) by wholesale, and not in the comparative slow degrees, as in the days succeeding the apostles, wherein it took hundreds of years, before those

whom the god of this world had blinded, and such covetous as were idolators, could say, that they had decidedly gained the field, and driven the true church into the wilderness, (a hidden solitary state,) there to mourn over such as were only worshippers in the outward court; who had no life in their court worship, for they knew it not, neither desired to know any thing, but him who, by the Holy Ghost, they could call their Lord Jesus Christ, and him crucified, (with whom their life was hid in that wilderness state,) whom the worshippers in the outward court knew not; for they had a god that they served, even Mammon, while they were loud in saying, Lord! Lord! but do not the thing which Christ commands.

And that is the same spirit which Satan wrought withal, even by such as loved to have the pre-eminence, and to be called of men, Rabbi; yea, and some that professed to be zealous reformers, and were loud against the errors and corruptions of popery; while at the same time, they take all care and much pains, to retain that very self same thing, which was the root of all popish corruption; and that is the love of money, the root of all evil, even covetousness which is idolatry, whereby the god of this world blindeth the mind; and unto such Satan offered the whole bait in bulk, which was quickly and so greedily taken in, that even the Jewish tythes were not too much for that stomach, which could swallow the camel; being greedy of filthy lucre, while at the same time, they affected

to strain at the gnat, (even things which may be counted small compared with covetousness,) and were loud against some of the branches which had grown out of that corrupt root; and against many of the popish superstitions, even while they flew to the prey, their Jewish tythes, which they were determined to hold at any rate; as if they would venture soul and all, rather than let that go, which would raise them to some account in the sight of men.

And in order to give so inconsistent a measure, some colour of consistency, they set to work also, to retain some fragments of old ceremonies, that so they might affect to have something to give the people for their money; as if they did not believe that our Lord had fulfilled and ended the whole of the Jewish dispensation, (of which tythes were as a main-spring, or leading feature,) and became the mediator of a better covenant; or else how could they set his new covenant at nought, and do therewith as they list?

But when the god of this world had blinded the mind, they could not see, how that for filthy lucre sake, they taught things which they ought not to teach, though many in that day saw them and their works, and not only mourned over them, but reprov'd and testified against them many ways, and even derided their doings (as Elijah did the priests of Baal), and that very often, in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth: and although they are but little noticed in their books, except to deride

and set them at nought, yet they are written in the Lord's book of remembrance, whose book is a true record, and his spirit a true recorder. And they were not a few, that both then and since, were raised up to testify against their high places; for a great people did the Lord of hosts raise up to bear the burthen and heat of that day of reformation, for it was not done in a corner: my soul adores that mercy and power, which began and carried on the work, in a sense, that it was not by the might nor strength of man, that the Lord of hosts wrought, but by his spirit.

And yet, have not many in effect belied the Lord, and still go about to belie him? and hath not their speech been stout against him, as if they would arrogate all to themselves? saying in effect, if not in words, that his great and marvellous light had shone out of their colleges and high places, which have arrogated more unto themselves (even to the blaspheming the power of God) than ever was committed upon the high places of Baal? But they cannot see that they are of Antichrist, being against Christ, in setting up their great learning, exalting and extolling it as God, and claiming the Jewish tythes and orders as the price thereof: all of which is contrary to Christ, as if he had never yet come and taken them out of the way, or nailed them to his cross; but God is not mocked, for, have they provoked him to jealousy? but have they not rather provoked to the confusion of their own faces? and although they deck themselves, and

ascend, so as to say in effect: "I will sit in the mount of the congregation and be like the most high," yet shall they not be brought down from thence, even to the sides of the pit?

And how great will be their amazement, when they shall see themselves as they ~~really~~ are, even that they are of mystery Babylon, which hath committed fornication with the kings of this earth, and hath been so joined to them in their affections and lusts, that the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication, (as in *Rev. xvii.*). And although they should be made so drunken and stupid, as to reel to and fro, through the deceit and instability of her earthly wisdom and craftiness; and that in her golden cup, there is mixed up a great store of fine decked carnal ordinances, of the highest pretension to religion, whereby she may even reign over the kings of the earth, yet their flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, can never be crucified thereby, nay, but rather built up together in deceit; even as he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit, so that which is joined to the world is one body. (i. *Cor. vi.*)

What a mystery is that great mother of harlots, that although her profession be so high, that she appears arrayed and decked as with gold, precious stones, and pearls, &c. (expressing all that is truly great, good, and valuable), yet in her hand is a golden cup, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication? oh! the depth of the deceit of

the heart of man, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? none but the Lord alone, who sheweth unto man what his thoughts are; and sheweth, that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, yea, and sheweth, that whosoever will be a friend of the world (according to the curse thereof), is the enemy of God. (*James iv. 4.*)

And if John wondered with great admiration, when he saw great mystery Babylon, (the enemy of the life and light of God, and of his saints and martyrs,) how great will be the amazement of all that dwell therein, when they behold their state, as it is written; "they who dwell on earth shall wonder (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world), when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is?" (*Rev. xvii. 18.*)

When the fearful judgments of Babylon were proclaimed, the voice was also heard from heaven saying, "come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues;" and setting forth her plagues, he saith, by how much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her, even double according to her works; and the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, &c. (as in *Rev. xviii.*). That it deeply concerns all, to beware of mystery Babylon,

and to take heed lest we be found sleeping within her borders, or in any of her dimensions, (or in any wise bowing to the god of this world, which blindeth the mind ;) for her merchants were the great men of the earth, and by her sorceries were all nations deceived.

And now it may be queried, what nation or people is there, (of what profession or religion, soever,) that have not, in some sort or other, been deceived or bewitched by her sorceries ? have they not been emboldened in iniquity one way or other by her influence, or example, even while they profess to dissent from her many inventions ? and would such dare to say, that they have clean escaped out of Babylon ? and seeing that we have the light, wherewith Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, even that which is the life of men, which would also bring home scripture warning and reproof, with as much certainty, as ever said, “ thou art the man,” which if we slight and reject, shall we not be left without excuse ?

But, alas ! many who are in greatest danger, may think their state the most safe and secure ; oh ! that such may remember, and lay to heart, the day that cometh as a thief in the night, rather than reject reproof, and put it from them, saying, that such judgments cannot await me, seeing that I am reformed, and not in that church or state, against which those woes are pronounced, but am

quite separated, and come out from amongst them.

Answer: come then and try the ground of your standing, though ye stand high as bishops of the reformed church, (or be accounted as masters of Israel,) but what is most to be feared, that such are too secure to have their standing called in question, even while they profess great respect for the scriptures, which chargeth us to examine, and prove your own selves whether ye be in faith; know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates; (ii. *Cor.* xiii. v.) the first query then should be, whether ye are born again? as the Lord queried of Nicodemus (who saith how can these things be) “art thou a master of Israel and knowest thou not these things?” adding, “marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; and except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (*John* iii.)

Come now, oh! ye bishops, and great monopolists, who engross to yourselves what is called a whole see, and if ye be seers indeed, say if ye have seen the kingdom of God in that way, whereby Christ saith it can only be seen? If ye are his, that must be your way alone, without any secondary condition of the confused degrees of Babylon, where the language is confounded, and the way of the Lord dishonoured; but the way of Christ is one, and God is one, and he is the one

way to the Father, and none can come to the Father but by him ; and all that climb up any other way, are thieves and robbers in his sight ; oh ! then, ye chief priests, will ye say, that he is your way, and that ye are born of water and of the spirit ?

Can ye set to your seal, that having drank of the water which he gives, ye thirst no more, but that it is in you, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life ? or must you go to seek your way in colleges or degrees of learning (or other inventions), which have not quenched your thirst unto this day ? and what thirst is that which is upon you ? is it David's thirst, who saith, " as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee oh God ! my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ;" or has yours been a worldly thirst, a thirst after forbidden knowledge, as a stepping stone toward earthly honour and promotion in the spirit of this world, which lusteth to have more and more, like the offspring of the horse leech, crying, give, give ?

And have ye in that same spirit, committed fornication with the kings of the earth, loving the world, that so the world may love you in return, and give you that very promotion which your soul lusteth after, even as your old mother mystery Babylon, the great mother of harlots, did before you ? and now will ye dare to say that ye are reformed, while ye follow the same lusts or covetousness ; not having your vile body changed, neither your

love pure and chaste, to love God above all, and your neighbour as yourselves? nay, but are ye not more like such as love to have the pre-eminence, and to be called Rabbi? and are there not some of you, that even love to be called Lord? if so, what think ye will your sheep's clothing (or high profession of the scriptures and of the reformed religion) do for you, if in the sight of an all-seeing God, ye should be found to be of the generation of the grievous wolves, which Paul said should enter in among the believers? and such as Peter saith, through covetousness, with feigned words should make merchandize of them?

Our Lord commands us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing; saying, "by their fruits ye shall know them, for no man gathereth grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles;" therefore beware lest your fruit be like the sour grapes which set the children's teeth on edge; and have ye not made the world like a wilderness, full of brambles and intricacies? where ye would leave no certain way, but should be strewed over ^{with} your entangling, and intricate windings, to corrupt the flocks from the simplicity which is in Christ, the heavenly vine, in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning; who remains for ever more, the good shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep; who saith, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no man cometh unto the Father but by me: and he saith, I am the door, and the way into the sheep-fold; and he is the way spoken of by

scripture prophecy, saying (in *Isaiah xxxv.* after the destruction of Babylon had been proclaimed,) that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, &c. “and an high way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

Behold then what a plain way the way of holiness is, where the Lord is waited upon, and served without distraction; who is the Prince and Saviour, that alone can give repentance and forgiveness of sins; and there is no falling short of the promise upon his part, but all was fulfilled and ended, yea, and every jot and tittle made good, when he said,—it is finished! and he that gave himself freely an offering for all, fulfilled and ended the old Jewish priesthood, and tythes; (for that which waxed old then vanished away, where the light of his new and everlasting covenant was made manifest;,) who sent forth his disciples saying, the time is fulfilled; and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel; and commanded his disciples to preach, saying, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand, freely ye have received, freely give.”

And yet, some who profess to preach the same gospel now, will charge as dearly as they would charge for any mercenary turn upon the face of the whole earth; and some will not scruple to claim tythes (even to the present day), as if we

were still under the law, and as if our Lord Jesus Christ was not yet come, to fulfil, and to be the end of the law for righteousness, unto every one that believeth; and are not such of Antichrist, (being against Christ,) who claim tythes for the sake of covetousness, as if that priesthood, under which our Lord was crucified, did still triumph over him?

But the scriptures declare (and a living remnant believe) that Christ triumphed over them, making a shew of them openly on the cross, yea, and blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, and contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (*Collos. ii.*) of which ordinances, tythes were a leading order; so that it is evident, that the chief-priests of the present day, would do as they list with the profession of Christ and his free gospel, like the chief priests who cried, crucify him, when he came unto them, even while they professed to be waiting for his coming, as the very subject and object of their hopes.

Oh! how blind is that mind which the god of this world blindeth? and although the Lord had said, that the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me, yet even they had a plea (such as it was), because they did it ignorantly; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of life and glory; and they had even an interest in the intercession of the blessed Redeemer, who prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know

not what they do ;” but how far they laid hold on that gleam of hope set before them, is known only to Him that knoweth all things, of whom it may be said, Lord thou knowest.

But as for the chief priests of the present day, whose covetousness hath no bounds, (seeing that they have usurped a sort of hierarchy, such as never was sanctioned, either by the law or the gospel,) my fears are strong, and my very heart faint for their sake ; because that how much soever the god of this world may have blinded them, I can hardly yet believe that they do it quite in ignorance, seeing that they have not only Moses and the prophets, but also Christ and his apostles if they would hear them ; and withal to put them still in mind, they have been warned from one generation to another, for the space of hundreds of years, by faithful witnesses, who saw by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, (and also read) that the gospel was not of, or by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, the everlasting high-priest, bishop, and shepherd over the house of God ; and that such high-priests as uphold the Jewish tythes, and through covetousness with feigned words make merchandize of the flocks, not only raised a great cloud of darkness through the nations, but that they, with their orders and subtlety, were the most powerful instruments that ever Satan yet found, for to oppose and withstand the coming of the Redeemer’s kingdom with life and power ; and that their pomp, and

greediness hath caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the heathen ; and if professed Christians should be heathen at heart, is not that the worst of heathenism ?

It is likely that some would ask what I mean by such a sweeping charge, as if I would say, that those high-priests were not what they should be in any respect ; and that I have not had an opportunity of knowing all that I assert.

Answer,—I mean just as I say, but may not tell even the one half of what I know, (as this generation could not bear it,) although my knowledge is very limited indeed, but by their fruits ye shall know them ; and although I may but very slightly glance at a little of their fruits, I would then ask, is there not a cause ? and may it not be queried, what meaneth then the saving alive the chief and great things ? yea, the horrible things of old mystery Babylon (for was not covetousness through deceit her leading crime) ? even while there had been a decking out, and a cutting away of the lesser or inferior evils, whereby the mind which the god of this world blindeth, may be so built up in deceit by such performances, as to exclaim (blessed) I have performed the word of the Lord : what meaneth then the sound and the bruit of those great princely revenues, with all that pomp and state allotted to men professing themselves to be the successors of Peter, Paul, and Timothy, &c. ?

What think ye, suppose that Peter or Paul, should

have been offered a gift of so many hundreds as ye have thousands by the year? think ye that they would have thought themselves honest men, if they should accept thereof (they being ministers of the free gospel)? would it not be more likely, if one of their converts should have been so corrupt as to make them such an offer, that they might have rebuked such so sharply as to say, “repent of this thy wickedness?” and what should they say, if they saw their brethren sneaking up before them cap in hand, bowing and cringing; with—my Lord, and your Lordship, or Reverence, &c.? I may not be correct about their titles; but what I have seen (though but little) was enough to make the heart to ache, that had any fear of God, or regard for man, to behold him so degraded, to the great dishonour of his Maker and Saviour; seeing that the mean man did not bow down, because of the virtue which he felt, or really respected; but because the great man bowed to the god of this world, therefore the mean man bows to him again, which is false honour, whether it be of Mammon or vain custom.

I am not insensible how that many would deride these remarks; and would even call it the fruit of wild nonsense, and perverse stingy ignorance. And I know also, how they have gone about to bolster up themselves in their unrighteous gain, by such sayings, as, that we should not muzzle the mouth of an ox that

treadeth out the corn ; that he who thresheth should thresh in hope ; that the labourer is worthy of his reward ; and that it was a meritorious deed to contribute to the necessities of the Apostles ; and many such like texts they have quoted, as if they thought it favours their greediness of gain ; even while the very scriptures which they seem to think favour their purpose, would be a sufficient condemnation of their covetousness if no more had been written thereupon ; and have they not thereby manifested, that their ignorance of God exceeds that of the ox, who knoweth his master's crib ? but these know not a living by the gospel which bringeth life and immortality to light ; which, while they know it not, the hope of their threshing is a dead hope, and the reward of their labour like that of the priests of Baal, even an earthly reward (a reward that perisheth) ; but what claim can men lay to the precepts and examples of the Apostles, whose greediness of gain seems to have no bounds ? if they say, that the minister should not be neglected, and that the Apostles partook of the bounty of those amongst whom they laboured, does that make for their purpose, nay, but decidedly condemns their covetousness ?

The Apostle Paul clearly points out to Timothy, and prescribes the utmost extent to which a faithful minister should look to be supplied, (and also sheweth by his own example, that he would not accept of such supply from others, while his

own hands could minister to his necessities;) that is to say, "having food and raiment let us be therewith content." (i. *Tim.* vi. 8.) But to be sure, great difficulty may arise about understanding what was meant by that of food and raiment; and in Babylon it may excite a great variety of opinion, whether it might mean tens, hundreds, or thousands a year; yea, it is likely that a question of such magnitude, might try the great skill, learning, and talents, of councils, colleges, and most renowned dignitaries; and it is uncertain whether they could ever tell what was meant by food and raiment; for now in Babel where the language is confounded, they will never find out the meaning of a thing which they would not choose to understand; like the Scribes, who said they could not tell from whence was the Baptism of John.

For if they chose that their moderation should appear unto all men, and if they had any fear of the Lord who is near, could they ever have proceeded from bad to worse, in such a course of greediness after gain, that now they would accept of thousands, while they should blush to receive hundreds? and so far have they exceeded all bounds, that if the offer should be made to one of them, he would take as much in two or three years, as our Lord and his Apostles made use of during their whole lives; and to complete the mockery, whoever takes most, is accounted the most holy or reverend; as if they thought with Simon

Magus, that the gift of God should abound according to the increase of money, and as is said of some (to set forth a state of desperate apostacy), who supposeth that gain is godliness; but the Apostle saith, that “godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Now mark what the true Christian calls great gain, even “godliness with contentment,” without any addition; but the apostate Christian supposeth the increase of revenue, tythes or benefice, to be gain; as I have often heard such things emphatically called, “a good living,” without any addition, so there we may see the false Christian’s great gain (or good living); but the Apostle writes as if earnestly contending against such antichristian desires, or ends, and sums up all that need be said or desired, in few words, even that “godliness with contentment is great gain,” as we may read in 1 *Tim.* vi. 5 6 7. 8. and many other parts of like import.

Objection,—I know that many would object, and charge me to beware how I speak of such, seeing that some of them are the chief men of the land, who also hath stood forth as champions for religion, and have done much and written many volumes in its defence, and who are even esteemed as fathers, prophets, or seers, yea, as heads of the tribes, and therefore should be respected.

Answer,—is it not manifest that I do respect them, (so far as the truth will allow,) by my thus exposing myself to all manner of reproach, deri-

sion and contempt, and perhaps other perils, in order that I may (even in some small degree) remind them of the danger of covetousness and carnal security, which in the simplicity and singleness of my heart, I hereby endeavour to set before them? and I can give no stronger testimony of my desire for their present and eternal welfare; and moreover, I should be sorry to take any thing off them as men, but rather lament that such brave men and talents should be so taken in the snare, as to be cooped up in Babylon's cage; and a people that is in such a case, it cannot be said of them, that their god is the Lord, if so be that they serve the world, and seek only the honour and wealth thereof; and the Lord saith, "ye cannot serve God and Mammon," and he saith, "how can ye believe who receive honour one of another?" and he saith, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, and the world will love his own."

Therefore, such as please men, and are set up by the world, will be heard and sought unto by the world; and such have done and written much, that the world may look to them exclusively, as may be seen by the swarms of volumes which they have written; having gathered abundance of good words together, from the Scriptures, and the experience of others; and though they never witnessed the state that spake them forth, yet they would make their own of them; with their subtle comments, which (although they

often flatly contradict each other), yet are all received as of superior authority, because the author has bowed unto the god of this world, therefore the world wanders after him with a sort of implicit adoration, insomuch, that if they do not understand what he saith (or has written) no matter; it is enough that it was written by his Lordship, Reverend, or Right Reverend some body; and again in like manner, if they should write or speak of never so trifling a matter, though it might amount to little more than two and two make four, yet the same high authority would add wonderful importance to ever so trifling a pretended discovery derived from such a source; insomuch, that we may be ready to query, who is this god of the world? is it Baal? I know that most would exclaim, horrible, to mention (Baal), for Christ Jesus the Lord, is my God, and I own no other.

Come then thou that sayest that Christ is thy Lord, what if thou shouldst be found a liar? for if he is thy Lord, where is his honour, and if he be thy master, where is his fear? wouldst thou even believe Christ or hear him, even so far as thou hearest and believeth thy fellow-creature (whom thou callest Lord and Right Reverend)? if so, Christ saith, call no man your master upon earth, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren? who is he then that calls and is called Lord and Master, and so breaks his Lord's command, and seeks for pre-eminence? Jesus

saith, "I am the light of the world, if any man believe in me he shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," (let us mind that, the light of life); and he saith, "he that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and he saith, "I am the living bread that cometh down from heaven," and saith, "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

And now, seeing that we have such exceeding great and precious promises, let us not deal falsely with our own souls, seeing that the scripture exhorts us, to try, and prove our own selves, "know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates," even as he saith, "I will walk in them, and dwell in them, and be their God, and they shall be my people;" come now, oh ye high professors! who would be called Leaders of the Flock of Christ, do ye believe and witness him after such a sort? is such your faith and experience? does he rule and reign in you, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, even Jesus of Nazareth, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him? and have ye known his righteous judgment set up in the soul, by whom the prince of this world is judged? if ye thus witness in deed and in truth, and desire to do truth, and bring your deeds to light, that they may be reprov'd thereby, such may with holy confidence draw nigh unto Him, (who

remains to be the father of mercies) in the full assurance of faith, even unto Him who can fit and prepare his little ones, for the evidence of his acceptance, even in the language of, “surely they are my people, children that will not lie, therefore he is their Saviour.”

But ah! alas for such as lie, and do not the truth, neither know the truth, and because they know it not in themselves, they set up the idol of their invention as the standard of truth, even while they set at nought the little ones (who believe in, and witness the light and power of Christ, as the ensign unto the nations), saying all manner of evil against them, because they care for none of their wares, for they that drink of the waters which Christ gives, thirst no more, neither care for the waters that flow out of the belly of mystery Babylon (the mother of harlots), because they see, neither the name nor the city of their God marked upon her, but names of blasphemy, whereby she hath blasphemed God, his tabernacle, and such as sit (or dwell) in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: and it may be even queried, whether the great councils and colleges are not under the dominion of the same spirit and mother of harlots, which love such as love her, and are not such (by our Lord) called hypocrites? and whether the blood of the souls of poor innocents may not be found in their skirts, even of fine young men, whom she hath destroyed and killed, yea, brought them into the death which is in the way and love of the world, in

whom the love of the father is not to be found, seeing that it never was in such as love the praise of men, for that spirit is an enemy to God, and as God would sit in the temple, exalting itself above all that is called God or that is worshipped.

Christ saith, "I am the way and the door, and all that climb up any other way are thieves and robbers;" and he saith, that it is written in the prophets, "and they shall all be taught of God;" and it is written, "and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," and he saith, "behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and of Judah," &c. "for this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest," as we may see in *Joel*, *Jeremiah* and *Acts* ii. *Heb.* viii. &c. but hath it not been the work of the chief priests (for ages past) to persuade the people not to believe in those great and precious promises? for now, say they, the business must be degrees of learning, even of arts and science, which must cost vast sums of money; and so they have gotten many

millions for persuading the people not to believe in Christ.

For what claim can any have to faith in Him, while they deny his promise of the spirit, seeing that the scripture saith, that it is the spirit that beareth witness of him? yea, that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, and that all gospel gifts and qualifications are wrought in man by that self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, yea, that the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal; and are they not of Antichrist, (being against Christ), who deny these things? yea, even denied them in such foul measure, as to take on to counterfeit the Lord's gifts and work for the sake of gain, and have gotten vastly larger sums of money for keeping the trade amongst themselves, and dividing it severally as they would, than what the Jews gave to the soldiers for saying that Christ is not risen, but that men came by night and stole him away? and yet, do they not reproach the gospel worse than ever the Jews did, who now affect to take away his unsearchable knowledge, and say, that they have gotten it all amongst themselves, and that it can be found no where else.*

And hath it not been the work of that spirit,

Was there ever grosser Infidelity, than to deny the inspiration of the Almighty, so as to assert, that the words of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, cannot now be understood by such like plain people in these days.—Alas! what is become of the promise

to get exalted above all that is of God? and have they not for such purposes, gathered up abundance of good words from scripture, and the experience of the Saints, which they steal, not having the sense thereof in their own living experience through Christ, who is the door, and all that climb up any other way, he hath declared thieves and robbers? but do they not climb up another way, who steal the Saints' words (and the experience of Prophets, and holy men of all ages) and would make their own of them, as if

of the gospel, if so be, that although such like men as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Amos, and Peter, James, and John, &c. who were ignorant and unlearned in the wisdom of this world, and yet were inspired to speak forth such heavenly prophecies, psalms, and doctrine; and now, shall we affirm, that the sense of their words, cannot be comprehended in these days, by such like herdsmen, ploughmen, and fishers, nor by any others except Church Divines bred up in colleges, who preach for hire, and divine for money; even such as our Lord cried wo unto; and shall we say, that none else can comprehend the sense of his and his people's words?

Was there ever grosser blasphemy than that, which not only denies all the promises of Christ in such foul measure, but would also set up the thing that he said wo unto? where is the Infidel that ever belched out more horrible blasphemy, than to assert, that the revelation of the spirit of God is not now to be poured forth even as in the time of the law, and to say, that the defect thereof (and of the falling short of the Lord's promises) must now be supplied by colleges, through the medium of philosophy and vain deceit; as much as to say that the state of the Gospel is worse than that of the law, and leaves the people still more bound up in a chain of darkness than any dispensation that ever went before?

they knew all about it, though they may read, that the things of God are foolishness to the natural man, and that except he be born again he cannot see, neither can he know them? but now they care not what they read, only to make a trade of it to get money, who run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and have been taught in their colleges, and great seminaries, for to take the prophets' and Saints' words, and to put their own comments, guessings, and expositions upon them, through philosophy and vain deceit, to make a gain thereof; and have they not thus brought forth heaps of volumes out of sacred

Did Satan ever devise a greater master stroke against the name and fame of the glorious Gospel? and is not the saying of our Lord verified in them, even that a man's foes are they of his own household? yet I might not have noticed them here in this manner, if they had only done and said all that in them lay against the promises of the Gospel as respects themselves; but all that seems little compared with what they have effected from age to age in deceiving the nations, seeing that they have prevailed to persuade them not to believe that the Lord would shew them any thing, only as handed forth through the medium of such Church dignitaries, insomuch that it may be asked, whether (in that respect) all nations have not been deceived, and bewitched by their sorcery; yea, so bewitched as to be made to believe, that there was no perfection for them beyond what was of the flesh; yea, even worse than what we read in *Gal. iii.* and 3.

And so being bewitched into such unbelief, is it any marvel if they should not witness the fulfilment of the Gospel promise? and if they cannot know even the scriptures, how can they say that they know God? and if they know him not, do they not raise an altar to an unknown God?

and profane books, in order that the world might believe (as they did of Simon Magus) that they themselves were some great ones, yea, the fountain, from whence the true knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, must now flow, and from such only?

But if the sorcerers of the latter ages, far outstrip Simon Magus in bewitching the people for money, is it not because they drive a more wholesale trade than even entered the thoughts of his heart? and so much the more hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, in not taking warning by such a cloud of testimonies and examples as have been set before them, that there is reason to fear, that it would be harder to convince one of those, than ten like Simon Magus, for (bad as he was) he abode with the apostles and wondered, but those of the present day, who bewitch the people for money, will stop at nothing that can serve their turn, for now they go to work and get money too, for denying the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Have they not even derided such as believe and bear witness unto the promise of Christ sending the Holy Spirit, which he promised should guide into all truth, and consequently out of all error, reproving the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, (mark of righteousness, and judgment.) and bring all things to remembrance, yea, in a word, that he would do all for them that believe in him, their light, life, and salvation,

unto old and young, sons and daughters, and he alone is the way (and there is none other), and all that enter in through him, the door, they find pasture, yea, living pasture from him the living God, and can bear living witness of the things which they have seen, heard, tasted, and handled of the word of life, according to his promise of the New Covenant, which should come to pass in the last times, wherein he would pour forth of his spirit upon old and young, servants and handmaids.

And such as thus believe, (when their faith is tried) can, from a living sense say, “ Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief;” and because of the savour of his healing virtue, they love him, and their love being chaste, and their dependance single upon him the fountain, they give God the glory, and dare not dishonour him by partaking of the wares and odours of mystery Babylon, because therein God is blasphemed, for there they set up to sale, the things which they say belong to Christ’s kingdom: and whereas the ways of Christ, and all his works, are all real and living; so on the other hand, all that appertain to Babylon, are dead fictitious images, the work of men’s hands and brains, yea, idols which are not so substantial as the old heathen gods of wood and stone, although they be much more subtile and refined, but in this they are the same, even that neither of them can see, nor feel, or know any thing.

And whereas the old Babel builders, who went about to build a tower to reach up to heaven, appear to have been but ill paid, and had their language confounded for their pains, although their brick and mortar might have been turned to some account for purposes upon earth, if they had believed in the Lord's covenant, who had given his promise, with the assurance of his bow in the cloud ; yet now, our modern Babel builders must be dearly paid for their work, although they never put in one substantial brick, for they build all by a sort of enchantment, and although their language was long ago confounded, yet they never stop building and lying, so long as they are well paid, although their work hath been, to rob God of his glory, and to steal from the unsearchable riches, that are in him, the way, the truth, and the life, who declared, that all who climb up any other way, are thieves and robbers ; so then, all who teach for hire, and say, that their great learning, rules, and orders, are the way, they set up man's way ; and do not such deny Christ and rob him of his glory, who saith, I am the way and the door ?

And now, you that have acquired great store of learning in Babel's language, which is confounded, what have you been doing with your philosophy and vain deceit, in which ye thought to climb up into the heavenly sheep-fold, even while in that wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, and sensual ? have ye not with

that subtle wisdom, brought forth many great volumes about questions tending to subvert and beguile from the simplicity which is in Christ? and when the serpent had thus (by his agents) bewildered the flocks, raised many doubts, and set up many creeds which God never commanded; and having so bewildered the flocks, by persuading the people that the way of Christ was very intricate, and needed great learning and talents, and many books and degrees of arts, &c. to find it out, and therefore they should have large sums of money for revealing such a great discovery; which in fact was only to rectify or clear up the thing that they themselves had entangled, which nevertheless they have not cleared up to this day, but they have even suggested new entanglements; for now they must be paid, and therefore it would not serve their purpose, to leave the way plain and strait, as our Lord declared it to be, whose whole law is fulfilled in one word, even love; but the language of Babel being confounded, do they not belie Christ, and rob him of his glory?

Have they not cried up such as raised the thick darkness and confusion, and even extolled them as the great lights and luminaries of the world? but Jesus saith, I am the light of the world, and he saith, I am the door, and the way; and it is said of that way, that it is so plain that the fool should not err therein (*Isaiah. xxxv.*), and that all might know him, from the least to the

greatest, (*Heb.* viii.) but then let us mark well and take good notice, that this plain way, is the way of holiness, and no ravenous beast can go therein, but the way of unholiness is an intricate beguiling way, where the ravenous beast goeth; yea, there goeth the wolf that scattereth the sheep: and have they not scattered from him that is the one way of life, into their many inventions, and many crooked ways of death and darkness, from Christ, who remains to be the one straight and narrow way of light and life, who fulfils all in one word, even love (*Matth.* vii.), while the creeds of Babel cannot be explained by many men and books of which there is no end.

Objection—I know that they would say, we only mean to direct the people to Christ, that is our business, and not to direct them to ourselves, nor to exalt ourselves, no such thing.

Answer—if ye only meant to direct them to Christ, ye need not great wages as ye now claim; but is not that the liar, and the Antichrist, who do not believe that Jesus is the Christ? for if ye could believe his word, he saith, freely ye have received; so then, the whole qualification for to direct the people to Christ, is received from him, a free gift from heaven (which excludes the craftiness of men); but this ye do not believe, and therefore do not believe in Christ, who is known even by his babes, to be all that is ascribed to him, yea, even their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and there never was one word of college learning, human orders, or mer-

cenary bargain in his covenant, which is all written in the heart, where all his children are taught of the Lord, and in righteousness established, and great is the peace of such, as they hold out unto the end ; but his wisdom is foolishness to all the wise men of Babel, where the most learned in their philosophy and vain deceit, are unlearned and unstable, and not established in righteousness, but in the deceivableness of unrighteousness, who never received the free gift, but paid dear, and spent much labour and study for to attain their gift, as they may call it, (in order to get money thereby,) which at best, is but an image or likeness, without light or perfection.

And even suppose such men should be favoured with a gift from Christ (who is no respecter of persons, whether learned or unlearned), yet if they should try to make money of it, they have only one disciple for such example (that is Judas) ; but mark his end, who set a price upon what he could say of his master—he could tell where he was, but could not convey any of his living virtue ; he was not a messenger of life, but of death ; although it seems he little thought (bad as he was) ; that his Lord would then be put to death, but he was blinded by the god of this world ; for when he saw what was done, he repented (but too late) ; so we may see that it is a fearful thing to make money of what we can tell of Christ : and now let us take notice what Judas was, we are told

that he believed not, and the Lord saith, "how can ye believe who receive honour one of another," and how can they believe or see what they do, who run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and for the praise of men.

Objection—they may object and say, that the case of Judas is quite different, inasmuch as he was an enemy and betrayer of the truth, but that they are the friends and promoters of it.

Answer—there is the deceit and delusion, and it is likely that Judas would have said the very same thing, and might say, that although he was resolved to gain something handsome by what he could tell about his master, that still he was his friend, and hoped no harm would come to him, though he should gain a goodly price for his discovery, while he yet made louder profession of his friendship than any of the rest; and if he thought there was true love in his kiss, that love was for the gain: so that if men once begin to run greedily after gain, they cannot see what error that may lead them into in the sight of God, even though all men should speak well of them.

But the truth is this, (if ye could bear it,) that such as preach for reward, are not what they think they are, nor what they profess to be, neither are they what others take them to be, for many of them are such as cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and the name of God to be blasphemed, even as he saith, "I know the blasphemy of them

that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan ;" so we may see, that it was accounted blasphemy in his sight, for to profess to be what they were not ; like Judas, who would cry master, with a kiss, for the sake of gain, (what a world of warning his case holds forth!) and we may see, that it was the high professors, who would be thought to be what they were not, that are called blasphemers and the synagogue of Satan, even such as loved to have the pre-eminence, who through covetousness with feigned words, make merchandize of the people, by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of, even by such as feigned themselves to be what they were not: and have they not feigned themselves to have gotten the disposal of all Christ's things into their power, yea, even of his living bread and water, springing up unto everlasting life, whereas they have only an image? For do they not say, that the inheritance is ours, who by their enchantment, would go about to make a likeness or image of the good things which Christ alone can give? yea, have not some of them (who got a goodly price for their work) said, that none could be fit for the kingdom of heaven, but such alone as they should wash, salt, and feed? although they had no living water, but that which flowed from Mystery Babylon, nor salt, but what came from Lot's wife, who had looked back into the world, neither had they living bread, but such as hath been polluted, as by the devil's table, even by the

kingdoms and glory of this world, such as the devil had offered, when he said, only worship me and all these shall be thine; and how can they have the grace of God, who turn it into wantonness, whereby they have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with the great ones of the earth, and loved their bed, where they have seen it, yea, loved not only their ease, but also the ways thereof, in which they have been defiled, with the love wherewith they love the world, for the sake of the gain and friendship thereof, which is enmity with God?

What would it profit a man if he could gain the whole world, yea, and if we had all the gifts of God? what would it avail us, if we receive his grace in vain, and run greedily after reward, as we read of Balaam, who was esteemed a great prophet, insomuch, that the king said of him, "I know that whomsoever thou blessest, is blessed, and whom thou cursest is cursed?" and many wonderful sayings and prophecies did he utter respecting Israel, and said, let me die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end may be like his; but whereunto was all his righteousness and gifts accounted of, when he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and his heart went after his covetousness? no doubt but he desired to please the king; and had an eye to the honour which Balack had promised him, who said, "am I not able indeed to promote thee to great honour?" and yet we have no account of his going the lengths.

which professed christians have gone to please great men; for Balaam said, "the word that God putteth in my mouth that shall I speak," though it displeased the king, and yet it is likely that he was still the more revered for his pretended devotion to the Lord; but what availed all, while he loved unrighteous gain, or promotion, which will ever lead to cast stumbling blocks before the people, and cause them to err, although such know not what they do, and may become so blinded by the god of this world, as not to see even so much as the beast they ride upon.

And Caiaphas was both high priest and a prophet, and prophesied of the offering up of Christ, yet how blind did he become, who for envy delivered up the Lord of glory to be crucified, though he knew not what he did? It seems likely, that he feared his great high priesthood should be ended and abolished, and so, the honour to which it had raised him in the world might be laid low, therefore they envied Christ, and said (in effect) "this is the heir, come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

And if the high priesthood in the hour of Caiaphas, then waxed old, and was ready to vanish away, what title, covenant, or claim, can the high priests of this day shew, for holding up the same priesthood by which the Lord of glory was crucified? If any should say, that it is not the same but quite a different thing, I would ask such again, how comes it then, that the gain

which they look for; every one from his quarter, is even raised; although they have laid aside the sacrifices of the law, and are now commanded to give freely, which shows how little they regard the Lord's command, who saith, by their fruits ye shall know them? and are they not manifest, who appear ravenous after gain; while the heart goeth after covetousness? and although the people may love to have it so, and that it should be said, like people like priest, yet the Lord saith, what will ye do in the end thereof.

Therefore, what would it avail in the sight of the Lord, though all men should speak well of them, as he saith they had spoken of the false prophets? yea, and although they should now be esteemed even as prophets and seers, and say that they are moved by the Holy Ghost; yet what would all that do for them, if the god of this world should so blind the mind, that they could neither see nor move, further than their own see? or should have no light in them, only as a larger income move or lead the way into what is called a greater, or more honourable see or chapter as they may call it? which see or chapter, never was set up either by Moses or the prophets, Christ, nor his apostles; but have they not rather been set up in mystery Babylon, even by such as Peter saith, should (with feigned words through covetousness) make merchandize of the people, which caused the way of truth to be evil-spoken of?

And if they should in no wise lose their reward, who even handed a cup of water to a disciple, what shall be said of them that take thousands a year, to destroy by such example, that which the Apostles laboured to build up; yea, laboured through stripes and necessities, hunger and nakedness, &c.

But now lamentable to behold, we may see this self same avarice in some, who profess themselves to be the successors of the ancient reformers, of whom it was said, that they had touched the Pope upon the crown, and the Monks on the belly; but alas! how doth the crown of pride reign at this day, even in some, whose god is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things? will their fruits acquit them in the sight of heaven and earth, should it be charged upon them, that they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own bellies? for now let who will want, must not they fare sumptuously every day, even looking after thousands a year, and high rank in the world? yea, and are there not some of them that would even fill their belly as with the east wind? and is not that a dry, barren, and unfruitful wind, which puffeth up with pride and emptiness, but is not such glorying their shame?

Hath not the Lord cried wo unto such as love to go in long robes, and to have the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the public places, and to be called master, or father, and for a pretence make long prayers, they shall receive

the greater condemnation? oh! ye high-priests of the present day, doth not these things concern you? are they not some of your fruits, yea, even some who would be called of the reformed church, and call the scriptures your rule? but what sort of reformation is to be seen upon you? from whence came these your badges of distinction and honour? for what purpose were they set up? is it to make the world believe that ye are more sacred and redeemed than other men? (how comes it then that ye should be as covetous as any people, and that, as your covetousness abounds so your reverence should abound also?) but where did ye find precept or example to sanction that attire, which ye put on, as a badge or signal of exclusive right for to preach the everlasting gospel? which office, ye say, belongs to you exclusively as your inheritance (who break the Lord's command, and neither receive nor give freely, but would have all to stand mute and hear you), who could not bear that such as receive freely, should preach freely, lest that should spoil their trade whereby they seek their wealth?

Is not that somewhat like the old craftsmen of the great Diana (which the world worshipped), whose conduct say, that now people should not occupy with Christ's gift, neither minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God? which gift they deny by their works, who say, in effect that

revelation has ceased, and that now the qualification to preach the gospel, must be acquired from books and curious arts; as much as to say, that the Lord never made good his promise, who said, that he would be with his own to the end of the world, and be in them, and give them mouth and wisdom, meat and drink, and all things needful, yea, that he would pour forth of his spirit upon them, and they should prophesy, and all know him, from the least to the greatest (all classes without respect of persons); but his unspeakable gift they deny, because it would spoil their craft, and the hope of their gains.

And it is no marvel that these things should appear foolishness and madness unto such as believe not, for how can they believe his word, who have not his word abiding in them, that after all their profession, believe not in the only begotten of the Father, (full of grace and truth,) who saith, how can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? and God is true; but for such as say, that they do believe and seek his honour, while they receive honour one of another, shall they not be found liars, with their books, by which with feigned words and fair speeches, they set forth the wares of their craftsmen, as if they were hardy enough to make merchandize of God and man,—time and eternity? whose craft no more came down from heaven than the great Diana, although they would have it so

esteemed, and have even gone about to father the monstrous order of their hierarchy, upon the precepts and example of our Lord and his Apostles, whose kingdom is not of this world, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit: but now are not the high-priests of the reformed Church (as they call it), dressed in the attire of Mystery Babylon, as if it should be of this world? but where did they find precept or example to sanction their many inventions, which are clean contrary to the simplicity of the gospel? let them shew if they can, where did they ever find a sanction for their robes, their mitre, their tythes and great benefices? look into the New Testament which they call their rule, would they say that one could find such things therein? nay, but shall we not as soon find the mass in that book? and if ye think to come off by calling them indifferent things, it may again be asked, if we dare to call things indifferent, against which our Lord pronounced wo, and the greater condemnation?

Objection—Some may object, and try to defend the claims of the priesthood, by saying, that they should have wherewith to enable them to make a figure in the world, in order to command respect and esteem amongst men, that so their religion may be thought the more respectable, and that, where great livings with their appendages have been laid aside, the case of the people appears nothing better than our own.

Answer—that was the devil's advice, who was a deceiver and a liar from the beginning, and no doubt, thought it the most plausible temptation, when he offered the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof; which offer the Lord rebuked, with a “get thee behind me, Satan;” here we may see, that such as accept of the glory of this world, they take counsel of Satan, and reject the Lord's example, and such take counsel but not of the Lord, and cover with a covering, but not of his spirit, and he saith, wo be unto them.

And as to, the objection, that some who profess to decline such things are never the better; that is a pitiful shift; and such as rather please the desire of the flesh and of the carnal mind, than do the will of God from the heart, cannot see which is better or worse; and moreover, if any profess to renounce the common evils of the world, while the heart goes after covetousness, though in quite another shape, it would be no wonder if their case should be nothing better.

But let us even suppose that they did live and act according to truth and the counsel of God; and yet if the people would not receive their testimony, would that be reason why they should betray the truth? what think ye? suppose the Apostles should have found the people evil affected against the truth, and if instead of going their way and leaving the results to the Lord, by shaking off the dust against them; I say, if instead thereof, they should have reasoned with them-

selves saying, we have tried this plain simple way, and find that the mind of the people is turned against it, even as the heart of one man, so that they will not receive our testimony; therefore, for the good of all, and that we may give no occasion of offence, let us conform a little to the glory of this world, which may better meet the views of the people. (even as the devil, who is wise, and knows what the people like best, hath long ago advised,) and all will be ours; what think ye? would that be doing the will of God? ye would doubtless say, to be sure not; and if not then, how comes it to differ now, seeing that the Lord is unchangeable, and his way the same? but the sum of all is this; that his servants they were whom they obeyed, and his servants we are whom we obey, but we cannot serve God and Mammon.

Objection—It may be further objected, that this would be straining things too far; and although there may be some truth in such remarks, still the world is not yet prepared to receive such strict primitive order and evangelical simplicity and self-denial.

Answer—Is not that the very way to keep the people still unprepared, to hinder them from receiving the love of truth in the simplicity which is in Christ? as the evil spirits which we read of, that would say (whenever the Saviour came), “what have we to do with thee? art thou come to torment us before the time?” so that it is evi-

dent, that if he had staid away for ever, they should still be unprepared, and rather have nothing to do with him; and to this day, such as make money by gainsaying, cannot bear to have the hope of their gain destroyed.

Objection—I am aware that they would still object and say, that none but a narrow, stingy, mean spirit, would limit the minister to a scanty income, which could not support any rank or consequence to make him appear respectable in the world; whereas, the great eminence, to which some of the church dignitaries have been raised by their wealth and rank (amongst men), hath been such a credit to our religion, as to bring over many converts and admirers, that would have disdained to own it, had the ministers thereof been of mean and lowly account in the world, such as the apostles were.

Answer,—that is the language of Judas, who would scrape all into his bag; but is not that a stingy, narrow, mean, yea, a blind spirit, which cannot see the exceeding superior glory of the gospel, above all mercenary or worldly considerations, which could add nothing to it, even suppose they could possess all that ever the devil offered of the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof? so that it is a narrow, blind, unbelieving spirit, that would put the wealth and greatness of this world, in competition with the unsearchable riches of Christ; as if the praise of men could add any thing to the glory of his kingdom, which

is not of this world ; but such as would make the glory of his kingdom, to consist, partly of this world, are unbelievers, and cannot see the kingdom, neither will they take his word, who saith, “ my kingdom is not of this world ;” but would (if they could) rather make him a liar, than lose their reputation amongst men ; and yet I do not mean to say, but that such sort of reputation, would be likely to add to their numbers in the broad way which leadeth to destruction, so that the belief, of the great wealth of the high-priest, being needful for the sake of the credit of religion, is a sentiment grounded upon the grand delusion of Satan ; yea, the offspring of a mind, blinded by the god of this world, which would suppose that gain is godliness ; such the scripture calls “ men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.” (i. *Tim.* vi. 5.)

And now if any say that these things are not so, do they not flatly contradict the Apostle, who even chargeth Timothy, to withdraw himself from such as look after that sort of gain ? (adding) “ but godliness with contentment is great gain ; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out : and having food and raiment let us be therewith content ; but they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition ; for the love of money is the root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith,

and pierced themselves through with many sorrows: but thou, oh! man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness," &c. (i. *Tim.* vi.)

But how comes it to pass, that the same thing which the scripture saith is a temptation and a snare, and draws into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; should now be the ground and high road to Right Reverence? and how comes it, that the same thing which the man of God was warned to flee from, should now seem needful for the man of God to flee into, and live in? wherefore then should any marvel, if I say, that such cannot be men of God? but are they not even worse than the men of the earth (who have their portion in this life), that claim an exclusive right to preach the everlasting gospel; while they flee into those things which drown men in destruction and perdition, which the man of God is warned to flee from?

Neither are those who mind high things, and would flee into wealth, any credit to religion; nay, but the very reproach and disgrace thereof; except it be in the eye of men of corrupt minds, who may suppose that gain is godliness; but although such may call them and their works, ornaments and luminaries; yet are they not in the sight of God, a great cause of darkness and reproach? and is not their pomp and greediness, a crying evil in the nations; yea, and an example of great extravagance, and expensive delicacy and folly? which,

although they have plastered over, and painted it never so finely, and make great orations about righteousness, temperance, and moderation, &c. are they not therefore like graves which appear not? and even as respects temporal things—have they not treacherously set an example of expensive delicacy and prodigality, which in the end must sink any state? and all cloaked up under the specious and delusive pretext, of great improvement and superior refinement, whereby they introduce burthens grievous to be borne, while they themselves will not remove them with a finger.

And what if it should be found, (and I might prove it if my limits would permit,) that much of what they call improvement and refinement, is only a mask to cover iniquity, and to conceal the deformity of sin? Alas! what famous work-masters hath the devil found amongst them, for to make his deceit appear polite and familiar, in order that the world should not be affrighted by the ugliness of his naked appearance; but as the light of Christ makes him manifest;—so they would make deceit seem tolerable, that it should not appear sinful as it really is. Jeremiah twice repeats, that from the least to the greatest they were given to covetousness, and from the prophet to the priest, every one dealeth falsely; and such were they who healed the hurt of the people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace, and so were not ashamed when they had

committed abomination, neither could they blush ; such as are said to walk in lies, and strengthen the hands of evil doers, of whom the Lord saith, “ they are unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants of Gomorrah.” (See *Jer.* xxiii.)

And how can it be otherwise with such as would be raised in the world, and mind high things, and would get riches by preaching the gospel ; seeing (as the Apostle saith), that it drowns men in destruction and perdition, yea, and that most likely at unawares, when the mind is blinded by the god of this world, the heart hardened through the deceitfulness of riches, which (as our Lord saith) choke the good seed ? We read, that the iniquity of Sodom, was pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, whereby they fell into many lusts, which drowned them in destruction ; and are not those things written for our warning ? yea, and the high professors were told (by our Lord himself), that it should be more tolerable in the day of judgment, for those cities which had been visited by divine vengeance for their iniquities, than for them, because of the many favours, mighty works, and warnings, which they made light of and rejected, and would have none of his reproofs, but do as they list ; and the apostles, Peter and Jude, &c. refer to the example of Sodom, and the cities of destruction, as an emblem of the end of all who run in the way of Balaam for reward, and love to have the pre-eminence like Kora, as being the

high road into that state, which beguiles unstable souls, and where the eyes are full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin.

Objection—some may yet object, that the ways, and course of life attributed to the Clergy and Dignitaries of the church, are herein stretched and strained, far beyond the real state of the case, seeing that many of their livings produce much less than is supposed, and that even the little that some of them yield, is often attended with many vexations, and is found scant enough with some, even to make both ends meet.

Answer—I did not mean to say, that a blessing attended such gains, (which for any thing I know might melt away like a snail,) I said, that many of them seek for much, yea, and get a great deal, and yet if it should come to little, that is only what the Lord saith should befall such as forsake his habitation, (even his house which is from heaven,) and run greedily to establish a dwelling in the earth, and set their nest on high.

Now if any say, that these are barefaced presumptuous assertions, to apply such close and severe sayings, to some of the first, best, and greatest in our Israel; I may say again to such, what am I, but less than nothing? yet if the state of the times should utter such a language as is herein held forth, be not ye therefore mockers? I only mean to mention a few instances of the fruits and the end which the scriptures say

await such and such works, which will apply to men of all stations, whose hearts go after covetousness; and if that should be found directly applicable to the state of a certain order of men, and if they (in effect) blame the scripture for condemning their ways, how shall I help that?

Nevertheless I am fully aware, that these things may as nearly concern others, to whom they may not appear so directly applicable, yet may be full as deep in that state which should take warning thereby, although it may not seem so literally to hit their case; and I should be grieved to write any thing, whereby one should be puffed up against another, but that all may fear; and thus I would be understood throughout; remembering that the Lord sees not as man sees, he looks at the heart—and he saith, “make clean the inside and the outside shall be clean also; and make the tree good, and his fruit shall be good likewise;” but I may insist, that the same cause will produce a like effect now as in the Apostles’ days, or I should rather have said, that what they did and wrote, was not confined to that day, but may be applicable to all sorts of people, in all ages, times, and places.

And if they that made haste to be rich should not be innocent, but fell into divers lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction, as repeated in many parts of scripture, in divers ways, words, and manners, to the same import; I may therefore ask, is it going very far to assert, that

the same thing may be as dangerous now as ever it was? is it going very far for to say, that we may not keep fire in our bosom without danger of being burned, neither can there be iniquity in the land and the Lord not to know it? and he saith, for the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath and smote him.

And have they not committed iniquity, which hath caused the wrath, and righteous judgments of the Lord, to be poured forth upon the nations like an overflowing scourge;* even while they who were a cause thereof, blessed themselves, and attributed his judgments to other causes, and not as being the desert of their own deeds, because they esteemed themselves orthodox Christians, even while in heart they go after Baal or Mammon, in their groves and high-places?

And are not such, more like them that sacrifice to devils, than to the living and true God; while it is manifest by their ways, that the heart and affections are more after the world, and the glory thereof, (which the devil offers to such as

* What was the cause of the late overturnings in France, and many parts of Europe? surely it might be traced to a source, very different from that assigned by the religious Infidel, who accounts himself an orthodox Christian?

For have there not been a torrent of deceit poured forth throughout the nations, by means of an evil confederacy of church and state? and did not that tend rapidly to corrupt the people, and hasten the filling up of their measure of iniquity, and enlarging the portion thereof? Alas! what a heap of corruption doth the harvest thereof bring forth.

bow thereunto,) rather than in the cross of Christ, and him crucified; which also should crucify them to the world, and the world to them; to which cross they appear enemies by their ways? and yet, such say they are true Christians, and would put it far away from themselves being the cause of the fierceness of the Lord's righteous judgments upon the nations; but when they come to their door, even like Jezebel, "who painted her face and tired her head, and looked out of the window, saying, had Zimri peace who slew his master?" yea, even while herself, her priests, her ways and doings, were the cause of the sword and destruction.

Is there any language which could more strikingly set forth the condition of the secure, self-righteous, carnal professor in the christian world, even at this day? but will not the Lord in his own way and time, cause the hail to sweep away such refuge of lies? yea, to sweep away the reproach wherewith they have reproached the living and eternal truth; who profess to serve the living God and Saviour while the hearts go after their covetousness; and the flesh with the affections and lusts, not being crucified, but the first fruits of the mind, love, and affections, offered up to their own honour and advancement in the world; yea, to gods, which can neither hear, nor see, nor feel, nor understand any thing beyond the spirit of the beast, which goeth down-

ward into the earth, where the serpent goeth upon his belly, whose meat is dust?

Their gods are more corrupt than the heathen idols of wood and stone; and will not the old heathen worshippers of wood and stone, rise up in the judgment against our modern idolaters, who reject the light of the glorious gospel, and make merchandize thereof, whose covetousness is more corrupt than the heathen idols? and if such profess to be men of God, do they not cause his name to be blasphemed, who for filthy lucre teach things which they ought not to teach, and who say they are what they are not? and hath he not noted such, saying, I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan? and does not Paul say (in ii. *Tim.* iii.) that in the last days perilous times should come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers, with many other evils, which he saith should be in men who had the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such as he chargeth Timothy to turn away, (even as he should turn from any idolatry) though they should be never so learned; for he saith of such, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?

And although they make a high profession of the truth and form of godliness, yet they withstand the truth, even as he that loved to have the pre-eminence, withstood the Apostles; and

is not the blasphemy of such as profess the truth, and form of godliness (while by their works they deny it), worse, and are they not greater enemies, and a greater reproach to the way of truth, than the open avowed infidel, against whom, (though very deservedly) they have made such an outcry of late years? and yet what is the blasphemy of the openly avowed infidel, compared with such as stab the truth in the dark, and betray it for money?

As for the pitiful blasphemy of the infidel, with all such works, they shall perish like their own dung; but I have at times been ready to tremble, in a sense of the blasphemy of many, who make a high profession of our Lord and Saviour, of his truth and form of godliness, yet serve not him, but their own bellies, and would make a trade of preaching the gospel for the sake of filthy lucre, who, as the scripture saith, “with feigned words” (good words) and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple, and make merchandize of the flocks; and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (*Rom. xvi. 18.* and *ii. Peter ii. 3.*)

Are they not the great blasphemers of all, who profess to know God, while by their works they deny him? and so cause the way and fame of the truth to be evil spoken of, even while they make the loudest outcry against the infidel, in order to cover their own filthiness of spirit, who are infidel

at heart, and whose fruit is the most dangerous weapon that ever Satan yet had to put into the hand of the poor infidel, to the great danger of his own soul, and that of others; yea, is not their spirit and their works, the very soil for infidelity to grow in, beyond any upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that were it not for the great mist of darkness and deceit, which they and the people who uphold them, have spread over the nations; the glorious gospel of God our Saviour, might now so shine forth, as to cause the infidel to tremble at the sight of his own state, as Felix did; but it would be easier to make the infidel, the publican, or harlot, to tremble for their condition, than some of them, who may have full as much cause, and may be in a more desperate case, being more fearfully prepared to set the truth at defiance than ever the infidel was; being built up and fortified, with the splendour and antiquity of their profession, with books, languages, order, and orders, yea, with all the multitude, strength, and interest of mystery Babylon on their side; it must be a marvellous display of divine power and mercy, that could arouse or awaken from such a state, and enable them to put off the old man with his deeds, and spoil all his goods.

And moreover, if those that have caused the way of truth to be evil spoken of, had but an eye to look about, and behold the things which came to pass in our days; if they had a heart

to understand the cause of such strange and sore judgments and overturnings, even of outward things, in states, nations, and governments, as the cruel wars, confusion and commotions, wherewith neighbouring states and nations hath been visited ; what was the cause thereof? was it any other than the sins of the people, and of their priests, who had caused the name of God to be blasphemed, by professing to be what they were not, insomuch that the people seeing their hypocrisy, at last (on their account), even despised the religion which such priests taught and professed, so that at last many of them would make no profession at all, but even denied all revealed religion, (as is reported of some in France, &c.) reckoning no doubt, that they could not be worse than the professor, who had no religion at all, while he professed a great deal.

For bad as Judas was to be an unbeliever, yet his pretending to believe and kiss his master, made his case look still worse, and more desperate ; so it is with such as profess to love and serve God, while the heart go after the world or Baal ; and what availed their great ado,—their sacrifices, and leaping upon their altars ; yea, though they should cry out and cut themselves in their zeal, yet if the heart went after a god that could neither hear, answer, or deliver, what avails their profession of the living and true God, while by their works they deny him, and cause his name to be blasphemed among the heathen ?

And then, (when the Lord's judgments overtake them) they cry out against the infidel, while they cannot see, that it is their own ways, and their doings, that procured it; is not the evil example of one covetous prelate, a greater scandal to the christian name, than the bickering of ten infidels? yea, hath not the infidel been hatched by the heat of their deceit, and the abomination of their example? Could the serpent lay his egg in a more likely deposit, than the evil savour of that influence, whereby they not only caused burthens to be bound on, grievous to be borne, but also strengthened the hands of evil doers, by ways tending to settle down the people at ease, and secure, in the midst of their sins, so long as they would put into their mouths? but if they refused to put into their mouths, then they would prepare war against them; for if any did honestly testify against their ways, it must be at their peril, and the least such had to expect, was to be branded as disturbers of the public peace, and enemies to common order and tranquillity; though the truth was, that they were real friends to both, yea, and to mankind, and to their country; but what then, they were the enemies of Baal, and of deceit, and that was thought crime enough in a state hastening to destruction.

And can we think, that the Lord would not visit for such things? or that he would not be avenged on such a nation as this? yea, though he might wait, and have long forbearance, yet

dare we to think, that unless we repent, that sin should go unpunished by the Judge of all the earth, who will do right, and who will render vengeance to such as hold a profession of the truth in unrighteousness ?

But happy will it be for such as find the gift of unfeigned repentance, even though they should be sorely chastised in this life ; but ah ! alas ! for such as would stout it out, and put it far away from themselves, and because of their high profession (and of the great multitude that profess as they do, and go in the broadway), would harden their heart and stiffen the neck, as if their deeds would stand the test, and that they were not the cause of the judgments which were in the earth ; but would put it far away from themselves, by crying out against the professed infidel, laying all the blame at their door, as if the avowed infidel did all the mischief ; and thus they would still turn people away from looking at home, where they might see the mischief which the false Christian is doing, both to his own soul, and in the world at large ; for although the works of the avowed infidel shall rot, yet how much more to be feared is that of the false, carnally minded Christian, who holds the truth in unrighteousness, and would have his portion in this life ; so take this along with you, if ye can bear it, that here is the root, the ground, and the main-stock of the infidel, even the false Christian, who profess Christ

and know him not, neither have his spirit, but live after the flesh.

And what if I might add, that such may be found to belong to mystery Babylon, that great city, which have even reigned over the kings of the earth ; which made John to wonder with great admiration, when he saw her, (long after old Babylon had been made an habitation for the birds of the desert,) and beheld her to be drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus ; whose life and spirit is crucified afresh in all her ways, which great city is also spiritually called Sodom and Egypt ; where also he saith, our Lord was crucified—even in Sodom and Egypt (long after he had ascended into heaven), but as this is the mystery, hid from the ages and generations of the wise and prudent of this world (though revealed unto babes), I may touch upon it but very slightly ; seeing, that if men are told of earthly things, and they believe not, how then should they bear to be told of heavenly things ? see then that first of all we should know this, that mystery Babylon is not only an earthly thing, but also sensual and devilish ; yea, she is become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, though she may get decked out never so fair, with all the glitter of a high profession of Christ, while clean contrary to his spirit, life, and power, yea, an enemy

thereto, even as the friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Therefore, well would it be for all who love their souls, to take good heed and beware of mystery Babylon, that they escape out of her many inventions, that so they may not be found in her, nor within any of her borders, precincts, or or dimensions; and here is a hint for us all, that we may take good notice and mark well, that she is called, mystery Babylon, the great mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; and although she is so great, and may be before all our faces, yet none of her inhabitants can tell who she is, nor what she is, for within her the language is confounded, and there, none can tell the name, nor the number of the beast which she rides upon; for even that is a great mystery; although she sits upon peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Babylon is called mystery, the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations; let it suffice here for to say, that great is the mystery of iniquity, and none but the Lord can reveal even so much; and it deeply concerns all for to know this which is revealed unto the babe, that so they may flee out of Babylon, for the voice from heaven saith unto the people, "come out of her, and partake not of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues:" so behold, behold, that plagues await Babylon, which are sealed up as her portion for ever, and pronounced to

be sure to come upon her : and it is written, “ strong is the Lord who judgeth her ;” oh then, how strong, dreadful, and irrevocable, are the judgments which await her !

Wherefore then need we marvel, if we should behold sore judgments poured forth upon a nation for the iniquity thereof? but doth it not speak loud as a warning unto us, who may be filling up our measure also? and if it be awful to behold judgments in the earth, poured forth upon those transitory enjoyments, which may be gone as in a moment of time, how unspeakably fearful is the sense of divine wrath, in the prospect of a state of fixedness and eternal duration, when time to us here shall be no longer, when, if any of us should be found the wicked and slothful servant, there is no returning for to mend it, or to do the work over again?

Therefore how deeply doth it concern every one of us, to believe on Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, that he also may wash and sanctify us, and redeem us from all iniquity? that so his judgments may not overtake us when too late, and our day is over, but that our sins being opened before hand unto judgment, may be wrought out and washed in the blood of the Lamb,—even his precious life, which hath been slain from the foundation of the world, that we may look in time upon Him whom we have pierced, yea, and open unto Him, that so our sins may not follow after; but that while

the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world may learn righteousness. Amen! even so, oh Lord! let it be quickly, seeing that we know not how long we may be inhabitants of this world, which, with the fashion thereof passeth away.

SECTION III.

An earnest Expostulation, in order to remind some who have long been speaking of Emancipation, that a better state than theirs is the portion of the willing and obedient Christian.—If haply they might be persuaded, to consider, how lamentably short, the freedom they aim at, falls, of the glorious liberty of the Children of God, even the sure portion and lot of inheritance, reserved in store for the Gospel Times.

Now would I address a word of remembrance unto some of my own countrymen, for them to read and consider; even unto those who have long been speaking of emancipation: but I mean more especially the poor amongst them, many of whom, deserve much sympathy and consideration, whose circumstance and allotment in this life hath been such, that some of you have had occasion to labour hard for your support, even to eat bread by the sweat of the brow, wherein many have laboured, and had patience in that respect, to an highly commendable degree, even so as to claim much consideration and sympathy, yea, and commiseration.

And as I have often by the space of many years, heard tell of your talk about emancipation, my very heart hath yearned toward you, so that I did ardently desire your emancipation

in a much larger, and higher degree than many amongst you thought was wanting, insomuch that I have often said in my heart, "oh! that I could even acquaint many of them, of the earnest longing desire which I feel for their more perfect emancipation," of which I knew they could not bear to be plainly told: and I should be grieved to wound their feelings unprofitably, fearing that it might rather tend to fret, than convince the mind; howbeit I know that it is much safer, even to do violence to such feelings, than altogether to withhold what I assuredly believe to be the truth; and still I had often to cast in my mind, whether I could ever find any means of conveying unto them, even a few of my thoughts, or feelings, upon the subject of their condition, which I still feel earnest to do before I leave this world; and seeing that time and opportunity is uncertain, and that there is neither work, device, nor knowledge in the grave, I shall endeavour to make use of the present time, to offer the following feeble simple remarks, to their serious consideration; which still seems but a small effort toward the performance of a long protracted duty; if haply I may in this manner, any ways acquit my own soul of that debt which I have long owed: not but that I am well aware, that they have often been reasoned and pleaded with, in a far more clear and powerful manner, than any feeble hints, which I may have to offer.

And moreover, I know (as I said before) that

many of them could not bear it, if I should speak plainly; for now I mean to address those that adhere to the decrees and authority of the Pope, and of those which they call Fathers, some of whom would hear nothing that might seem to run contrary to the current of their own settled system; being in that respect, too much like the Jews of old, who thought the greatness and antiquity of their church establishment, a sufficient answer to all that might appear contrary thereunto; yet even all that, and much more that I might mention, may not excuse me from attempting to offer them a few lines to read and consider; although I know that it seems like speaking to the air, as I cannot do it in a way that many of them would approve, if I speak somewhat plainly; and I dare not do otherwise if I say any thing, and keep a clear conscience toward God, and a conscience that would not offend the tender good seed in any, although it is, (even to this day,) is held in sore bondage in many minds, and such will be offended, and it is impossible that it should not be so.

But it is for the poor that I am principally concerned, to whom I may speak the more plainly, seeing that I am one of their own equals in many respects, my manner of life being many ways like theirs, and what some would call quite unlearned, being ignorant of languages or even the rules of grammar, and have still less to boast of religious attainments, having nothing to rely upon

but the mercy of God ; and if any say, wherefore then should I address others, seeing that I am neither learned nor righteous? my answer should be to such, that I only remind them to examine for themselves while they have time, and for my own part, if I can attain the simplicity of a child, that may suffice ; and although I have fallen sadly short of being a good and faithful servant, yet I can speak of the great forbearance of the Lord toward me, insomuch that I may say of these things of which I write, that although I have but little school learning (as may easily appear), yet I have still a mind, which can in some small measure feel, and understand, and speak of things which my spiritual eye hath seen, and which I have heard, and tasted, and handled of the word of life, which the Lord hath richly in store for all those that believe in, and love his appearance.

And that is the faith which I would invite the poor freely to partake of, which would make them free indeed, for that is it which overcometh the world, and brings into the glorious liberty of the children of God, yea, to come taste and see how good the Lord is, even to see for themselves, and not depend on my word, or the word of any man, seeing that they may recur to a certain indubitable evidence in themselves, (according to Scripture testimony) whether these things are so ; and although I may deplore the weakness of my own faith, yet this I must acknowledge, that so far as

I have believed, and received the Lord in the way of his coming (by his light and grace), I have so far found him to be all to me, that the Scriptures say of him, yea, more than I could ask or think; and seeing that I myself have so far fallen short, I may the more earnestly call to others, to hold fast that which is freely given them of God, that they may occupy therewith, even with the free gift of his grace, which is given to every man to profit withal, *Titus*, ii. 11. and (as Peter declared,) that is the universal standing religion, through which (in every nation) all that fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him.

But to return to the subject of the following lines; I would be understood, in nowise to interfere with those temporal subjects, which have long been a bone of contention, especially amongst such as may always be striving who shall be the greatest; and if any should suppose, that these remarks may have even an indirect reference thereunto, I may tell them plainly, that I mean no such thing; and am so free from the least party motive in thus writing, that I have not told any one individual that I had even thought of such a thing, although I may take occasion (from a subject which has been long agitated) to refer to one of far greater importance than any thing of a worldly or fading duration, albeit I do not hereby mean, that men should neglect their temporal concerns, because that herein I have nothing to do therewith.

But the emancipation which concerns people of

all professions, is, that they may be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God ; so that although I may now speak somewhat plainly, (which I must do, if I say any thing,) yet I am fully aware, that others may have as much need of deliverance from that bondage as those I now address, though I shall herein confine these remarks, to those who have been long talking of Emancipation ; and would ask, or I should rather have said, I desire that ye may ask the witness which God hath placed for himself in every one of your consciences, whether ye have not need of higher, and much larger Emancipation than ye now look for, which none but Christ Jesus the Lord himself can give ? and if the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed, not only free from the bondage of corruption, but also from the rudiments of the world, which are after the commandments and traditions of men, and not after Christ (*Collos. ii.*) ; and the Scripture saith, “ wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not ; taste not ; handle not ; which all perish with the using ;) after the commandments and doctrines of men ? ” *Collos. ii. 20. 21. 22.*

Have not many of you been subject (and in bondage) unto that which perish with the using ? and have ye not been taught, that it would be unbelief to call in question, the commandments, doctrines, and traditions of men, while at the same

time ye profess to believe in Christ, whose command is, to beware of men, yea, to beware, even of them who come in a name as high as prophets, and profess to be the sheeep of his fold? yet the Lord commands to beware of such, and to know them by their fruits; now if any should take men's word, (and go after their ordinances and commandments) without looking into their fruits, can such say that they honour Christ, who saith, beware of men, and know them by their fruits? (*Matthew* vii. 16. 20) therefore do ye not reject the Lord's commandment, (and make it of no effect,) if ye take men's word, without looking into their fruits? and would it not seem in such a case, a great sign that men do not look into their own fruits? who take other men's word, and trust in a high profession, while they slight their Lord's command, who saith, "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven," (*Matthew* vii. 21. so we may see, that it is not much speaking, or great profession, but doing the will of God from the heart, that will find acceptance with the searcher of hearts, who requires fruits of righteousness from all, and in all, and requires us to know men by their fruits, and not to rely upon their profession nor their words, for, by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple, who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; as in *Rom.* xvi. 18.

And the Apostle Peter saith, that “ through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you, (2 *Peter* ii.) by reason of whom (he saith) the way of truth shall be evil spoken of,” so then if men seek to make a gain of the gospel, are not the fruits of such stark naught opposite to the Apostles of Christ? and all that receive them, and desire to be in bondage to such as go after covetous practices, plainly shew, that they have not examined their own fruits, and also shew, that they depend too much upon an empty profession, while they can pass by covetousness in their ministers; and if any say that it is not so, let them look at the fearful case of Simon Magus, who let such a thought enter into his heart, as that the gift of God might be purchased for money; and there we see the fearful state of such as think even such a thought, as to give or take money for holy things; the apostle Peter said unto Simon, “ thy money perish with thee; because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased for money, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God; repent therefore of this thy wickedness, &c. for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” (*Acts* viii. 20 21. 22 23)

There we may see one short and sure way of knowing that such men’s fruits must be evil and bitter as Peter saith, he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, who even

thought that the gift of God could be purchased for money; and if we had any regard for the apostle Peter's judgment, we should see how sadly he wanted emancipation, who was in the bond of iniquity; and even Simon himself did not stout it out, although he had just then been turned from taking money for divining among the heathen, yet bad as he was, he desired Peter to pray for him, that none of the judgments, (which fell upon such as thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money,) should come upon him.

And now, oh ye that say much about emancipation, have ye considered what it is? do ye indeed think that it would be emancipation, only for the Bishops of Rome, and of Canterbury, to be united together in a mutual bond or compact of amity, and fellowship? who might have thought it good for the world to be divided between them, as respects religious or church affairs, even as might have been thought of Cæsar and Anthony, in national, or state affairs; howbeit, we may see that the Lord took it from them both,—neither of whom now governs even a city, although one of them had been adored as a god; and yet who would now say, that it was any great loss to the world, or that the bondage thereof should be increased because they could no longer sway a sceptre over it? and in like manner, if the day should yet come, (which I believe will come, in the Lord's time,) when neither of these great

metropolitan, Diotrephean princes, should sway their sceptre over the Christian world; who would then say, that the world should be a loser, or that the bondage thereof should be the greater, because their golden chain could no longer bind the people.

I know that some would call this bold and presumptuous reasoning (or worse), to speak so familiar or irreverend, of the highest and most holy men in the world; but let such ask themselves again, whether they are not the bold, presumptuous and irreverend indeed, that can make light of Christ's command? who saith, "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, ye shall know them by their fruits;" and is it not remarkable, that in this place, the Lord should only instance one mark of the false prophets, that is, "they are inwardly ravenous," and "ye shall know them by their fruits?" as much as to say, that such as will not see greediness or covetousness, to be a great destroying evil, shall be left to follow their own deceivings; therefore, are they not fearfully contemners of the Lord's command, who take men upon trust, just as they may be, without ever seeming to look, or care, what their fruits are? is there not great danger that such care too little what their own fruits may be? and is it not remarkable, that men mind nothing less, than that which the Lord first of all commands?

Now I may not make very many remarks upon the great princes of divinity, who are adored as great divines, (according to the sway they can acquire in this world;) as it might fill volumes, to point out the many strong reasons which we have to question, whether ever the different gifts and qualifications meet for the ministry and government of Christ's kingdom, could be made stepping-stones to what is called promotion and preferment unto the great princely revenues, and high rank in this world, after which many of them aspire: for my own part, when I hear of the intrigue and canvassing which have sometimes been resorted unto, to attain such chairs of dignity; I say, that I should fear it would be bordering on blasphemy, for to insist, that such ways could be agreeable to the heavenly order, and government of the kingdom of Christ, (who saith, "my kingdom is not of this world,") nay, but some of their ways have been so vastly different, yea, so like the world in greediness, that the chairs of dignity, to which many of them have arrived in the world would quite disqualify men for the government or ministry of the church of Christ, even supposing them to have had every needful qualification,) and if such dignity should be attained unto, partly by human policy, the very thought thereof would be shocking indeed: therefore, as before observed, I may not attempt to point to many particulars, on that subject, seeing that these things are so plain and self-

evident, that every intelligent mind (which stands open to conviction) may see for themselves, and know the fruits, whether they be of God or of man.

So that, to be very short, I may confine myself to one simple point on that head, and that is, a query, respecting one of their great Patriarchs, Bishops, or Fathers, &c. according to their different ranks or stations; how come they to be such? as for example; let us suppose the Popes, seeing that they are thought highest of all, and seeing that they have arrived to a pitch of wordly pomp and power, far beyond any thing that a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, (who should be crucified to the world, and the world to him,) should aim at, therefore how came they to get up to such a height? and what means do they still use to attain thereunto? have any of them practised any thing like the gross common intrigue of the world, in order to forward their scheme of advancement thereto, that so they might get in before another, (perhaps better than themselves?) have they ever courted the support of kings and princes of this world to favour their promotion, and then pretend to receive it with reluctance, like a sort of mock diffidence, if so, is not that like having men's persons in admiration because of advantage, which the scriptures point out as a mark of desperate depravity? (*Jude 17.*)

And now (unless men wilfully close their eyes),

most may easily answer the question, whether these things are so, at least there are few but may know it in some degree, and if such thing there be, even in a small measure is it not clean contrary to the nature of Christ's kingdom? who saith unto Peter, "that flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but the spirit of my Father, which is in heaven; and upon that rock will I build my church," (even upon the spirit of the Father, which was revealed in Peter,) and that is the rock, which all the the building of God must be built upon, even upon the revelation of his own spirit, and not upon flesh and blood. But the great high priests which men set up, (who madly claim the chair of Peter,) are flesh and blood, and are also set up by flesh and blood; and all such are in bondage unto this day; and even while they speak of liberty, they are not only servants of corruption, but even desire to be in bondage to the elements and rudiments of the world; yea, in bondage to the commandments of men, which are not after Christ, but after flesh and blood.

But Christ saith, "I am the way and the truth, and the life," (mind that,) and there is no intrigue, nor wordly policy, nor seeking for pre-eminence, in him, the way; all that is of the flesh, and is in bondage, for he saith, "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;" but he that is the way, was as a sheep dumb before the shearers, so opened he not his mouth, whose kingdom is not of this world, and who told his

disciples, that he that would be great, must be servant of all, and set a little child before them, to rebuke such as even thought who should be greatest, telling them, that was like the princes of the Gentiles, whose great ones exercise dominion and authority over them, but it shall not be so among you. (*Matthew xx. Mark x. Luke xxii.*)

And thus we may observe, (as in other parts likewise), the Lord refers to the example of a little child, for to illustrate the state which he would bring his disciples unto, even a state of pure simple innocence, which could not be capable of even the thought of craft, intrigue, or dominion; and let us also mark well, and take good notice, that he likewise refers them especially to the example which himself had left them, even an example of simplicity and self-denial beyond the power of description; and now if any should try to screen the European Prelates, from being measured by the above rule, I say, if they should try to get off by saying, that all this hath a more deep and spiritual meaning Answer—I shall heartily concur, that it hath a deep, very deep spiritual meaning indeed, which yet will no ways destroy the heavenly example of simplicity and self-denial which the Lord himself set up, nay, but rather tends to establish it; insomuch, that the depth and spirituality to which they refer, doth still more powerfully witness against all, who go about to uphold a thing that is set up after the flesh, and the will of man.

For when our blessed Saviour set forth the little child as an example, he designed a perfect example, (and not a partial one,) for all his works are perfect, and that will be found to answer in every case. The little child was a perfect child, not capable of art, guile, or contrivance, and could not be said to have any faculty, but its attraction to, and dependance upon the parent, which is a perfect attraction, being the work of God, (whose works are all perfect;) hence it follows, that all who are meet for the kingdom of heaven, must be so changed or converted (from all that appertains to the old or first man, which is after old Adam in the fall,) to a perfect measure of the nature, which, after God, is created unto righteousness and true holiness, even the nature of Christ, called the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit: though this is foolishness unto all the wise men in old Adam in the fall, who are looking, who will be greatest, (like their old father, who aspired above the station which the Lord appointed him, and so fell into the earth); I say, though these things are foolishness to such, yet they are plain and even natural to the least babe, that is born of the immortal seed and word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; that is the one word which fulfilleth the whole law, even that which loveth God the Father above all, and his neighbour as himself, who seek only the glory of God, and the good of his neighbour as of himself, so cannot

seek, or be ravenous after preferment in the world above others, for the sake of advantage, and therefore, could not, nor dare not, (for the whole world) seek after pre-eminence above their brethren, because of the gifts bestowed upon them, (whether for the ministry of the gospel, or whatever other gift,) and of course, could not respect persons because of advantage.

Neither could they ask (or accept of) any prince or great man's favour or interest, for the purpose of their advancement, to exalted or lucrative stations in the church ; I say, that it would be altogether impossible for a true servant of Jesus Christ, to seek or accept of preferment in such a way, because that if he be Christ's, and buried with him, by his heavenly spiritual baptism, into death, then, he seeks the things which are above, where the Lord is, with whom he is crucified to the world, and the world, (with the glory thereof,) unto him, so that the servant of the Lord is dead to the promotion of the world, being raised by his Lord, above all filthy lucre, and above the honour, or praise of men ; from the bondage of which, Christ doth make him free, and raiseth him above them, and so he seeks the things which are above, where Christ is ; and Christ never was set up as a great high-priest upon earth, with carnal pomp and state, after the order and manner of the priests of this world ; nay, but by them he was, and is crucified, even afresh, and put to open shame ; for is it not a shame, (even to the Christian name,) and a great

reproach, that such as profess to be ambassadors for Christ unto the people, should now seek to be dubbed up in state, like some great heathen Prince or Nabob, and would in like manner be adored above his brethren, even by his brethren? yea, even while he may affect a sort of mock humility, in the midst of all that state and splendour.

I say mock humility, (because I must speak a little plain,) seeing that he never could have got up to such a seat, with the humility of Jesus, or his Apostles, though he might take a counterfeit humility along with him, and many other counterfeit graces, which the wise men in old Adam may esteem real and sterling, and never can see the difference, only by the light of the Lord, which he commands to believe and walk in, even his light in the conscience, which, if taken heed unto, will agree with what is written in the scriptures, and will agree with the gracious words which proceedeth out of his mouth, who is the Prince and the Saviour, who alone granteth repentance and forgiveness of sins, (*Acts* v. 31.) and he commands all to believe, and walk in the light, that ye may be the children of light, and of the day, and hereby also are we warned to beware of rebelling against the light, lest darkness overtake us, even as befell such as rejected the Lord, when he walked among men. (*John* iii. 20. xii. 35 36)

Christ is that light, and the day of God's salvation

to the ends of the earth ; who saith, that he was come to send fire on the earth ; and it was said, that “ the day of the Lord should burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and that day should burn them up, and leave them neither root nor branch ;” and thus would he baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, (see *Mal.* iv. *Matt.* iii. 12. *Luke* iii. 17. and xii. 49.) here then we may see that it is Christ alone who is the creator, and redeemer, who creates anew, and redeems, and separates the precious from the vile, and sheweth that which pleaseth God, and that which pleaseth him not ; yea, and separateth that which is pure, tried as in the fire, and chosen as in the furnace, from all counterfeit, yea, from all that which is compared to dross, tin, or reprobate silver ; in a word, it is Christ that doth all our works in us and for us.

Therefore, how doth it behove us “ to seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us, for in him we live, move, and have our being,” (*Acts* xvii. 27. 28.) howbeit, the wise scribe, by all his researches, can never know this, though the babe know it right well, who is redeemed from the earth, to heaven, which is the way of holiness, which the vultures eye hath not seen, nor any ravenous beast trod therein ; so that which is after prey, or ravenous for pre-eminence, cannot see,

nor belong to the way of holiness, for Christ is the way; and he is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, (*Heb.* ix. 24.)

And they that are Christ's, seek the things that are above where he is, but they that seek the honour and dignity which is according to the mastery and greatness of this world, cannot belong to his kingdom, because such mastery is not of the little child, but of the ravenous beast of prey; what think ye? could a little child be tempted by an offer, even of the whole world, for to leave its parent, and take up with a wild beast? no more should a child of God be induced to forsake him, and go after the glory of this world; which is dangerous for a believer to take up with, as it would be for an infant to take up with a wild beast, (or as it was for Adam, to take up with the serpent, who was more subtle than all the beasts of the field,) for the friendship of the world is enmity with God.

But they that walk in the light as Christ commands, become children of the light, (*John* xii. 36.) and such see the ravenous beast, and know him by his ravenous fruits, that he is inwardly of a ravenous nature, after mastery and pre-eminence, which the whole world cannot see as it really is, unless the spirit of truth shew it them; and even though they might say they see, yet should not know that it is a devourer, because all is in the same nature, until he that made man change

the heart and affections, and then the least child so changed, should have no life in being preferred above others; which would be a cruel bondage to him, who through the law of Christ, is dead to the world, being in the life of him, who saith, one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

And such dare not make light of the heavenly example which their Lord and Master left to the world, in that adorable love, wherein he walked amongst men, going about doing good, and they that witness a measure of the life and spirituality of his doctrine and kingdom in themselves, cannot, nor dare not, set at nought the heavenly example of simplicity and self-denial which he shewed forth, in order to be spread before the face of all people, which also his Apostles dispersed abroad, through nations far and wide; yet not by the mighty strength, wisdom, nor learning of man, neither by the subtle contrivance of great courtly councils or synods, nor through the favour of princes, but by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts, even in the face of all those great things; the foolish and weak things which the Lord chose (for to manifest his power), confounded the wise and the mighty, with all their great temple and high-priests wherein they trusted; and they did confound them all, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them all through the power of the cross of Christ; the Lamb with his followers had the victory through death; and in all that mighty conflict, who will dare to say, that even one faith-

ful follower of the Lamb, ever applied to the great men of the world for their interest, to get promoted to exalted stations in the Church, or to great sees, livings, or benefices, as they are now called? or who would say, that if such great revenues should have been offered them, that they would, or could, or dare accept of such things, though they had little of their own, being mostly of the labouring class, and of small account in the world's esteem?

It may then be queried, how it came to pass, that such a great change should take place in the Christian world?

Answer,—Just as was foretold by the Apostles, who saw, even in their days, that the mystery of iniquity was then at work, to stop the spreading of the glorious message of glad tidings; for Satan, seeing his kingdom shaken, and observing that he lost the field in every encounter, being foiled even by such as through death, gained the victory over sin and the devil, he betakes himself to a more fatal warfare than open opposition, which was, to turn professor, and so became transformed as an angel of light, and his ministers, as the ministers of righteousness; (2 *Cor.* xi. 13. 14. 15.) and so wrought, as Paul saith, by false Apostles, deceitful workers, doting about questions and strifes of words, destitute of the truth; supposing, that gain is godliness; (see 1st *Tim.*) and John reminded the believers, how they had been told, that Anti-christ should come, and saith, that even then, many of them were already come; and saith,

that Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence received him not (i. *John* ii. 18. iii. *John* 9.) and Peter saith “ through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you ; and that many should follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (ii *Peter* ii. 2. 3.) ; and what greater reason could be given for the way of truth to be evil spoken of, than to set up a great high-priesthood to get money by it, like the heathen, and even retaining some of the Jewish and heathenish superstitions and traditions as matters of gospel faith and practice, which they called Christian ordinances ?

But yet I am well aware, that the predictions and warnings of the Apostles, applied to the churches, far more extensively than that which fell under the dominion of the Roman Emperors ; seeing that those prophetic declarations might equally apply to other parts of the world, even to the Greek or Asiatic church, &c. which set up their own heads also ; and brought the people into bondage to such as loved to have the pre-eminence, saying that they only were right, and all others wrong, in matters of Christian faith, as they called it, much of which was feigned through their many inventions, who (as Peter saith) through covetousness with feigned words made merchandize of the people ; and such as Paul saith, teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre sake ; who by good words and fair

speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, (*Rom.* xvi. 18. *Phil.* iii. 19. *Titus* i. 11.) and peradventure, such ways were practised, even for ends of state policy, by such as Jude saith, have men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

And yet although, (as I said before,) there were other nations beside what appertained to the great Roman empire, to which these things might be abundantly applicable; yet it was too evident, that in many amongst them likewise, the same prophecies were verified and fulfilled; yea, it would seem that they might be ranked among the foremost, which run greedily into great worldly pomp and parade, like the heathen; and when that empire made a general profession of the Christian religion, in process of time, they began in many respects, to intermix the discipline of the church with the policy of the state, which might be even worse than human policy; having not only taken up with the wisdom of this world, (which is foolishness with God,) but had even long wallowed in great wealth, ease, and luxury, and when such took the reins, and claimed to themselves exclusively, the knowledge and sole ordering of the things of God, what then was to be expected from such a state of things? surely worse, (if worse could have been,) than even what followed amongst them, had it not been, that the Lord preserved a seed for himself, even all along, which the wisdom of this world, and those great ones did not know; like as John

foresaw in the revelations, of the Church flying into the wilderness, descriptive of a hidden and solitary state, there to bewail the captivity and desolation, which the empire, and dominion of the world was gaining over the truth as it is in Jesus; but they could not touch the truth itself, though they might shut it out from themselves, and by their works, withstand the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the souls of men, according to the new gospel covenant; and so they even withstood the word of faith which the apostles preached, the law written in the heart, Christ within, the hope of glory, whose grace teacheth what to do, and what to leave undone, and so bringeth unto him that redeems from all iniquity, and purifieth unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (*Jeremiah xxxi. 31. Heb. viii. 13. xii. 24. Titus ii. 12 14. Rom. x. 6 8.*)

But they withstood the spreading of the gospel, who walked not in the light of the Lord, which searcheth the inward parts, which is also called the candle of the Lord; and so the candle of the wicked is put out; and if the light that is in us become darkness, how great is that darkness: and so they, who turned from the light and grace in themselves, could not believe in the fulness and efficacy thereof; and therefore, they betook themselves to set up divers lifeless inventions, imitations, and empty shadows, for the people to observe, and take up a rest in; and because they knew not the substance in them-

selves, their work was to withstand it in others, though they knew not what they did; for the wisdom of the princes of this world, as such, could never know it, (1. *Cor.* ii. 6. 8) and although that seed, or remnant, which the Lord reserved unto himself, could do no more for them, than mourn over, pray for, and reprove them, as way might open; yet even in that hidden forlorn condition, as a captive, yet free in the Lord, and although the world spoke all manner of evil against such, it was stronger than all the combined powers of darkness, while the Father was near to sustain it.

And now, while I thus write, I should be far, very far, from taking any thing away from those great ones which is their due, though I know of nothing which can be honestly attributed to them; yet, if it be said, that there is something due to them, for extending even the name of Christianity down to posterity, even although by their works they withstand the power and efficacy thereof, I should be glad to allow them all that, if it be their due; but there will still remain a doubt, whether they can claim even so much; as it is more than probable, that the very name and profession of Christianity, should have been more extended, and abundantly more honourable (according to the true honour which is of God), if they had kept their places, and learned of Christ, not to pretend to a knowledge and dominion, which God hath for ever placed out of the reach of the wisdom and greatness of this world, as such; and

moreover this only brings to mind, a more seriously dreadful reflection of what may still lie at their door, and that is, whether it may not be much harder, to disentangle the Christian religion, from the grievous burthen of tradition and superstition, which from time to time they have bound upon it, (tending sadly to corrupt from the simplicity which is in Christ) than it would be to convert the heathen? but that I must now leave, as it might take volumes to point it out in all its bearings.

And this brings me to the main subject which I aimed at in writing these remarks; so that all that is gone before, seems only like a preface, to set the following considerations in order; and as I desire to be fully understood, it seemed needful in the first place, to refer to the ground and cause of those things which I may more closely touch upon, as concerns our present and future felicity; and although I have but feebly referred to such grounds and causes, yet that seems but little matter, as the intelligent reader may supply that defect; my design being no more, than simply to stir up the mind to a profitable consideration of these things, although I know that the wise scribe, and the self secure professor, would scoff at, and deride it altogether; but I should cheerfully bear their scorn and derision, (being prepared to expect that and more,) for the sake of the simple-hearted, though it be but a solitary individual, to whose conscience I

commend these things in the sight of God; not to the cunning crafty wisdom, which may be wise in its own conceit, but unto that in every one, which can see, feel, taste, and handle, though never so small a measure of the word of life, which is of God, so as to be able to say for themselves, to the praise of his grace, "the life was manifested and we have seen it," and although that which is gone before, is much longer than I first designed, yet I shall endeavour to make what follows very short; having no view to offer any thing that may appear either systematic, or precise, but just purpose to throw a few plain simple remarks together as they occur, without much view to arrangement or connection; my aim herein being neither to prove, nor to teach, seeing that he who will not think for himself, cannot be helped, but must lie in the ditch; therefore, I only desire to excite to a serious consideration of those things, respecting which it behoves each of us to be in good earnest, seeing that we know not how soon time to us may be no longer, when we shall have to give an account of the deeds done in the body, which account is of no less moment, than that which concerns a fearful bondage, or a glorious liberty for evermore.

If ye would enter into life, keep the commandments, which is, that ye believe on the Son, and he that hath the Son, hath life; but if we do not keep the commandments, and so have not the Son, and know him not unto life, but lie in the death,

upon which the wrath of God resteth ; oh then ! it will not serve us for to say, “ that the serpent beguiled or deceived me,” neither will it do, for to say, “ that I relied upon others, who have persuaded me, that forms and shadows (and the like) were safe to take up rest in ; and these who should have known better than myself, have deceived me, and caused me to rest in a form, which I did the more securely, because I saw others do the same, and therefore I was afraid to strive to enter in at the strait gate, where the life and substance is, because few I saw that found it ;” alas ! poor soul, is not that the fear of man, which bringeth a snare ? and may it not be called cruel bondage indeed ?

The sum then of that which I would remind all (who talk of emancipation) to consider, is, that the true freedom of spirit which the Lord gives, is to be desired before all earthly liberty ; not that I mean thereby, in any wise, to make light of temporal freedom, but, inasmuch as true freedom of spirit, is the choicest of all blessings, (which also may be regarded as the parent of true temporal freedom,) therefore it has a twofold, yea, a tenfold claim upon our first consideration ; I mean then simply, that liberty, which no man can give, but Christ alone, whose gracious invitation is, “ come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest : take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly of heart ; and ye shall find rest

unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light." (*Matthew* xi. 28-29-30)

Now seeing, in the first place, that the Lord saith, "come unto me," would it not be the sorest of all bondage, to have bounds or limits set up against our coming unto him, though it should be only a bondage to the fear of man? and how much more dangerous still, is that bondage, which men desire for themselves, because they feel not the weight and burthen thereof, whose conscience is not awakened to the danger of resting in a form of godliness without the power thereof, who have not the true hunger and thirst after the living water and the bread which Christ giveth, that cometh down from God, out of heaven, which nourisheth up the soul unto eternal life? (*John* vi) but they that do not so live unto him, not being dead with Christ unto the rudiments of the world, (*Col.* ii. 20.) they desire to be in bondage thereunto, because that is congenial to the carnal mind and will of man.

Like unto the Galatians, whom the Apostle upbraids (even after they had known God), he saith, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" and saith, that he was afraid that labour was bestowed upon them in vain, seeing how they turned again into outward things, such as the observance of days and times, &c. even like as if they had been still under the law, so that he saith, "oh foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched

you?" &c. "are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? have ye suffered so many things in vain?" and even saith that "whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace: (for we through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith);" and they that fall from grace, fall from Christ, and such come not unto him, (though they profess never so high,) but would be justified in outside things, and even desire to be in bondage thereunto. (See *Gal.* iii. 1. 3. 4. iv. 9. 10. 11. v. 4. 5.)

If any should object, that the apostle was then speaking of the law, "which we would by no means rest in, although we rest in our own outward things, which are Christian rudiments, and ordinances."

Answer—that would only make the case still worse, (if worse could be,) because then it would neither be law nor gospel; for the gospel is the ministration of the spirit, and not an outward, carnal thing, (ii. *Cor.* iii. 6. 8. 17. &c.) and therefore, if a thing be outward and carnal, and not of the law, what then can it be, seeing that it cannot be of the gospel, which is inward and spiritual? must it not then be of human invention, of which we are charged to beware? (*Coll.* ii. 8.) and the believer is commanded to live, and walk in the spirit, out of which should grow all the fruits of righteousness, such should not fulfil the lust of the flesh; and let us mind how the scripture

warns us to "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ," &c. and after reasoning upon the magnitude of the subject, he saith, "wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship," &c. (*Col. ii. 8. 20. 21. 22. 23.*)

And seeing that many parts of the New Testament correspond with the above, and that the whole book, from Matthew to Revelations, testifies, that the gospel is of the grace of God, even a glorious free dispensation of light life and power, wherein God would teach his people himself, even as it is written, that they should be all taught of God, that he would put his law, even his holy Spirit within them, whereby they might see their sins, and their Saviour, who would cleanse the inside, and the outside should thereby be clean also; agreeably to scripture prophecies in the Old Testament, respecting the new covenant, which God would make with his people (through Christ,) in the last, or gospel days, wherein he would pour forth of his spirit upon them, and they should prophecy; and even upon servants and handmaids, that all should know him from

the least of them unto the greatest, and so forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more; (*Jeremiah*, xxxi. 31. *Hebrews*, viii. 8 to 13. *Joel*, ii. *Acts*, ii.); yea, that he would be with them to the end of the world.

And having fulfilled and abolished the law of carnal ordinances, he would also confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent ones of this world; yea, that he would cause the wisdom of their wise ones to perish, that so the Lord might be unto his people, their wisdom and righteousness, their sanctification and redemption, and that his way should be a way of holiness, and so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, should not err therein. (*Isaiah*, xxix. *Isaiah*, xxxv. i. *Cor.* i.) These are great and precious promises; and, blessed for ever be the ever adorable name of Jehovah, a remnant, (even at this day,) can set to their seal, that he is not slack concerning his promise, but can say, (because they see, feel, taste and handle,) that all may know him from the least unto the greatest, if they were but obedient to the teachings of his grace and believe therein.

And now, seeing that such heavenly blessings are not only laid up in store for the believer, but we are called to come and partake of all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (beyond the power of tongue or pen to set forth,) I say, seeing that it is even so, would it not be a sore and grievous bondage, to be withheld or

debarred from coming boldly unto the throne of grace, that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need? and would it not be unspeakable bondage, to be bound up to apply unto man, for that which is to be had immediately from God himself? and would not the case be still more deplorable, if the men to whom we were bound to apply, should persuade us, that such precious promises were only in store for themselves, or for men of their order, to dispense such portion thereof unto others, as they may think fit? and would it not be still worse, to be persuaded, not to believe that those good things were within our reach, which the Lord hath in store for all, from the least unto the greatest? and so to be persuaded, that although Christ died, and is risen, and is at the right hand of God, for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, and yet for us to believe that he will not grant it, neither give the victory over sin, death, hell and the grave, so long as we live, only as we employ or allow others to perform some enchantment in our favour, which some say must be done, or it will go ill with us at the last, even though we read, that we are complete in Christ. (*Coll* xxiii. 10.)

We are plainly admonished and informed, how we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing; even by abiding in the patience of Christ for the trial of our faith; and if any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

(*James*, i.) So there we may see the free portion of the believer, and the lot of his inheritance; but who can call it a free gift, while he is so afraid to come into the full possession of it, as to fear and obey man rather than God? yea, to fear men, who may persuade us that we are not complete in Christ without them, who look for their gain from their quarter, and tell us, "that instead of wanting nothing, we should receive nothing direct from God himself; who, instead of giving liberally, would give nothing, only as men may choose to dispense it unto us for the sake of gain."

Would not that be grievous and sore bondage indeed; yea, even worse than the Jews under the law, while subject to a dispensation of types and figures? which even the Jews themselves looked forward that they should be fulfilled by the coming of the *Messias*, (the substance of all figures;) so they looked, that such a state should draw to an end; and moreover, they had prophets which the Lord raised up amongst them by his spirit, to whom they often gave heed; and Moses told them, that the word was very nigh in the heart and mouth; and Jesus told the Jews, that Moses wrote of him; but they could not read Moses while their eyes were blinded by the god of this world; and therefore they would not receive the Lord when he came unto them, (whose heart was far from him,) they being in bondage to the tradition of men, whereby they rejected the commandment of God, making his

word of none effect through their tradition.
(*Matthew*, xv. 6. *Mark*, vii. 9—13.)

I am well aware that these remarks may be too applicable to different societies of people, at this day, and therefore should be very far from saying, that they do not apply to others beside those I now address; but believe, that many amongst them who speak much of emancipation, still desire to be in bondage of a more serious nature than even that whereof they complain, who desire to be in bondage under the elements and rudiments of the world, even to the commandments and tradition of men.

Would it not be a serious bondage indeed, to be brought under the dominion of that same wisdom, policy, and fear of man, which caused the Jews to reject the Saviour, when he came unto them, even while they were waiting for him? who for want of the true fear of God, were brought into bondage to the fear and wisdom of man, and had got so confident of their law, ordinances, priests, and temple, that they could not bear to be told of any thing beyond them, while they claimed, that they held their charter immediately from God himself, (who spake it unto Moses) and that they themselves were Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man; and therefore, thought it blasphemy, and heresy, for to insist upon any thing higher; so that it was a great offence to them to say "that they should be set free," who answered with derision and con-

tempt, saying, “ we be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin, but if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” (*John* viii.) they would still answer, that Abraham is our father; and so would boast of their being Abraham’s seed, and could count their genealogies, and boast of their succession; and could read, that in Abraham’s seed all nations were blessed: but John told them, that God was able, of the stones, to raise up seed unto Abraham; but they would build themselves up by recounting, that the true succession had run with them from the creation of the world, and from thence concluded, that they were not only the oldest, but the only chosen people of God, therefore their speech was stout against him, because they desired to be in bondage to the works of the law, which could not set them free from sin; but not knowing the load thereof to be grievous, neither being weary therewith, and so, as they desired to have their lusts spared, so they desired to be in bondage unto ceremonies, and unto the elements of men, which could never take away sins, nor renew unto the righteousness of the faith of Abraham.

And moreover, they were afraid to look beyond resting in the ceremonies of the law; because (as I observed before) they, being in bondage to sin, that brought them under bondage

unto the fear of man, for want of the true fear of the Lord, and so they became a prey to their covetous priests, and to the wisdom of their wise scribes, who would exclaim, (when the blessed Saviour brought the offer of salvation to their door), "hath any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed," (*John* vii. 48. 49.) and thus the poor Jews, were cheated of the knowledge of the long looked for Messias, even by their covetous priests, and wise scribes, whose mind the wisdom, and the god of this world had blinded.

But how very different did it fare with such (even among the Jews), as looked for redemption in Jerusalem; who had felt the grievous load of sin, and laboured to get a release therefrom,—who had found the priests to be all physicians of no value? (even though that priesthood had been ordained of the Lord, until Christ should come to fulfil, and put an end thereunto, by the bringing in of a better hope;) but they that looked for redemption in Israel, then or now, cannot rest in any created thing (even though it should be as solemn as the law, which was ordained of God himself), nothing will ever do for to heal the wounded conscience soundly, or deliver from the grievous load, and burthen of sin, but Christ alone, by whom the world was made; even he that opens the eye to see what sin, and deceit is, he alone it is, who can open the eye that can see the Sa-

viour; and such as see him that way, can say, “ come and see him that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?”

Such can receive him whom the wise scribe doth not know, though he may range through his endless genealogies, and yet see no further, being taken in his own craftiness, and tangled in his own web, wherein also (if he could), he would entangle all that come in his way; for he doth not know, (with all his wisdom,) how weak his web is, though all that stand upon solid ground, may see it to be light as vanity, and rotten as dirt, even as saith the blind man, (whose eyes Jesus had opened,) “ why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes; was it ever heard, since the world began, that men opened the eyes of one who was born blind?” and he told them, and tells us all, how God is to be known, who “ heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth;” mind that, (if any man,) not if such and such men, or orders of men, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, who saith, that his will is, that neither at outward Jerusalem, nor yet at any other high place, but in the spirit and in truth, shall such worship the Father, who do his will in time to come; even so saith the Son, whom the voice from heaven commandeth us to hear.

And now, after all, if we should be so far in bondage to the precepts and fear of man, as to be

afraid to hear him that speaketh from heaven, because it should not correspond with that which the wisdom and will of man had prescribed in days of old, though partly for gain, or peradventure for some state policy, which might have chosen to accommodate its usage to the general customs of the people? and if such things, (being corrupt in the formation,) should be thought, not only venerable with age, but even sacred on account of many ages, and if the people should be brought into bondage thereunto, how great is that bondage? may we not say, how fearful, if it be such as should provoke the Lord to jealousy, by the works of men's hands, or the imagination of the heart?

Would not that be worse, and far more inexcusable than the Jews, who could not hear, nor receive Christ, because of their determined attachment unto old usages, and to the ceremonies of the law, in which they were not only deeply rooted by custom and education, but held it venerable and sacred, for the antiquity thereof, and the many shocks which it had sustained? through all of which it was marvellously preserved, as by a peculiar hand of providence; but above all, that it was agreed upon all sides, that the law was of divine institution, appointment, and authority; and therefore, they could not bear to have it changed, though they had loaded it with their own traditions, whereunto also they desired to be in bondage, (as the carnal mind would always

rather have an uneasy conscience amused by the performance of bodily exercise, than to be thoroughly awakened to a sense of how much they needed the mediator of a better covenant,) and while they were secure in the midst of their sins, they believed that their priests could do the needful for them, if more was needed.

And thus we may see, that there was great allowance to be made for the Jews; yea, and great allowance, and forbearance, was shewn them, by Him, who knew the frailty of man, shewing adorable compassion, even until he wept over them; yea, and with the hand stretched forth, even with many miracles, and wonderful works, wrought amongst them, during that day of heavenly visitation; but the unalterable purpose of heaven would not be changed for their sake, though they were the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, yet if they rejected his spirit, and had not a measure thereof, all availed them nothing, for the Lord would have no dead thing, and they would not forsake their dead works, to serve the living God, who would have gathered them into life and peace, from all their dead works, but they would not.

And doth not their sad and deplorable case, speak loud as a solemn warning to all? and I desire for myself, that I may be instructed thereby, for surely, those records, which we may find repeated, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not barely designed as a history of such

marvellous events, merely for the information of a few ecclesiastics ; or even as a general account of such unparalleled occurrences ; but, as they set forth, the power, justice, and mercy of God, do they not stand as an awful warning and admonition, even unto the ends of the earth ? and seeing that their case was doleful, how should we escape, and shall we not be inexcusable, if we be found any ways following their steps, seeing that we are left without excuse—inasmuch, as we have not only their example as a warning and admonition, that we fall not after the same example of unbelief ? but we also profess to believe in Christ, who submitted to the law, fulfilled it, and is the end thereof, for righteousness, unto the believer ; yea, and blotting out the hand-writing of the ordinances thereof, which was against us, and contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (*Col. ii. 14.*)

And we may see how he reasoned with them that believed, and with them who believed not ; yea, in marvellous condescension, to shew them, and us, and all, that they were carnal, and in bondage to many things which could not profit ; and that he wanted only one thing, which should do all for us ; yea, more than we could ask or think ; and that is to believe on him, and so walk in the spirit, teaching, even by many similitudes and parables, to illustrate that one great object of eternal salvation, which is himself ; for he was all, who saith, that God is a spirit, and I

am the door, the way, the light, the life, the vine, the bread, the water, &c. and so he shews, that he is one and all unto the believer, whose soul is athirst for the living, and eternal substance.

In like manner also did the apostles labour to direct all to the one thing needful, and to persuade the people, that as many as were baptized into Christ, should put on Christ; then there was nothing to be attributed unto man, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, but Christ is to be all in all, and that nothing should avail but the new creature, which only should be accounted the spiritual Israel of God, upon whom his peace should rest. (*Rom* ii. 28. 29. *Gal*. iii. 27. 28. 29. and v. 6. and vi. 15. 16. &c) And the Apostle chargeth the believers, that “as they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him, and to beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, (in whom ye are complete,” &c.) and he chargeth the Galatians to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage;” and we may see how he upbraids them, with desiring to be in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements, saying; “oh! foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, &c are ye so foolish, having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? have ye suffered so many things in vain?” &c. and saith in chapter iv. “but now, after

that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." &c.

And shall we not be inexcusable, seeing that we have such a cloud of testimonies, (as may be seen throughout the new Testament,) unto the sufficiency of the light, the spirit, and grace of God, for to bring salvation unto all that believe and are taught thereby? and how shall we escape, if we refuse, or neglect so great salvation, and turn aside unto the weak and beggarly elements, and desire to be in bondage thereunto? even to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and to dishonour him by the works of men's hands; for he will not give his glory unto another; who would save his people from their sins, even by the right hand of his own righteousness, and not by the might, power, wisdom, or works of man, but by his own spirit, would he effect the whole effectual work; and wo be to the man that should dishonour Him, by saying, that the Lord cannot, or will not save me without the help or contrivance of another man.

Would not that be to leave us in sad cruel bondage indeed? even in bondage unto man, whose breath is in his nostrils, who is not only frail, but changeable? and the Lord saith, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, and he warns us

to dig deep, and not to build upon any changeable thing, that may be shaken, but upon the revelation of his own eternal spirit; even upon that same spirit, which revealed him unto his disciples, while the wise men, and the great ones of the world, did not know him, (but some said one thing, and some another) because they believed not in the light, whereby alone, man may see his sins, and so come to see him, who giveth power to repent and forsake them, yea, to see his Saviour, to cleanse, and save from all sin; and that was the message which the apostles received, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (i. *John*. i.)

And by that true light, the apostles saw the word which was from the beginning, from which mankind had fallen by transgression; and as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, yea, all that receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul, even the word of faith, which the apostles preached, (*Rom*. x. 8.) to which Paul directed the men of Athens, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:" (*Acts*. xvii. 27.) and thus were they called to seek the Lord, "who had suffered the manners of the nations, and, though he had winked at the times of such ignorance, yet now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by

Jesus Christ ;" so here we may see, the one word, which he that will judge the world, hath set up, over the many words of men, and the one way of holiness, over the many ways which never can make holy ; and the one manner, over the many manners of the nations, which followed their own ways ; for now he would only have the one way of holiness, even the way of the one living and true God, who is a spirit ; and would have men to walk in him, who will come to judge all the works of the flesh, and will of man ; that so his own kingdom, (which is free and spiritual,) may come, that the will of God, who is a spirit, may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven, who alone hath the one bread, which cometh down from him out of heaven, and nourisheth the soul unto everlasting life

And seeing, that such is the lot of our inheritance, and the way which our Lord Jesus Christ, hath cast up, even a new and living way, and the good old way, which was before Abraham ; for Jesus saith, before Abraham was, I am ; and he saith, I am the way, and the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me ; and now, would it not be grievous, and sore bondage indeed, to be afraid to trust him, because men should say, that they are the way, and none can go without them ? so now, here is the strife, man saith I am the way to Christ, but Jesus saith, I am the way, and the door, and so saith his apostles, who would not be brought into bondage, to

any man, and warned the people, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, that they be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage, saying (in another place,) “ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (*Rom. viii.*)

We do not find the Jews charged with a want of belief, that the Messiah should come, and fulfil all things, nay, it even appears, that he was the very object of their expectation, and their hope; and yet when he came, they were in such sore bondage, to their sins, their wisdom, and their priests, yea, and to their many traditions, whereby they made the commandment of God of none effect. (*Mat. xv. Mark vii*) that they rejected him, and could not receive him in the way of his coming; yea, and although they still profess to believe that he will yet come, and be their Saviour, yet we justly fear, that they want the living faith in him, because they did not know him for themselves when he came, having their dependance placed upon their divines and wise men, and so were in bondage unto those who deceived them. And now we say that their faith is without effect, because they did not believe in the works, which he wrought upon earth, therefore their faith avails them nothing, though they should fully believe all that is written of him and of his coming, yea, and all that he should do for sinners, in this world, and in the world to come.

Now while we bewail the sad state of the Jews, we have great cause to look at our own condition ; and if we should be afraid to examine, and see for ourselves, (whether his great work of sanctification is going forward in us,) and any ways depend upon man, so as to become slothful or careless about the real foundation of our standing, such bondage may be worse, (if worse could be,) and more dangerous, than even the Jews' condition was ; and what would make it still more awful, would be, to get satisfied, on account of seeing a great multitude going the same road, seeing that our Saviour saith, that many go in the broad way ; and the Jews told the apostle, that his sect was every where spoken against ; and we may see how pressingly we are admonished in *ii. Cor. xiii. 5.* to examine what is within us, lest we be deceived, even “ to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith ; prove your own selves ; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ? ” and *Rom. x.* sheweth what the righteousness which is of faith saith, “ what saith it ? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart ; that is, the word of faith, which we preach ; “ and now after all, if we should be so in bondage to the fear of man, as to be afraid to examine for ourselves, would such be doers of the ingrafted word, though they may be hearers, deceiving their own selves, by depending implicitly upon what others should say or do for us ? was not that a cause why the Jews did

not know or believe the Saviour? and if we should follow their steps, may not our case be dangerous as theirs was, while we cannot plead the same excuse as they, who were under the old priesthood, where the lips of the priest was to preserve their knowledge; and they would say, "when the Messias cometh, which is called Christ, he will tell us all things? and now that he is come, are we afraid to receive him, or to believe the works which he doth in the world?"

Are we so in bondage to the fear, and to the precepts and traditions of men, as not to trust Him, who would shew us all things, and bring all to our remembrance? or suffice it to say, that he would shew us the one thing needful, even the unspeakable gift of God; and yet if we do not thus receive him, who stands at the door, and knocks, who alone can cast out the man of sin, and set us free therefrom, and deliver from all unrighteousness; but if we refuse him in spirit, as the Jews did, and know him not here, what ground have we to hope that he would own us hereafter, who saith, "depart from me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you?" and he saith, "if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," and the scripture speaks of his "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel," which gospel is of the grace of God, yea, the power of God unto salvation, commended to every one's conscience, even to the word nigh in the heart, yea, of the word, or new covenant,

wherein all should know him, from the least to the greatest ; but alas ! for such as are afraid to believe in the power and efficacy of that covenant, wherein alone the overcoming can be sure ; if therefore, they should be found among the fearful and unbelieving, which are also called abominable, and if the Lord wash and cleanse us not, we shall be filthy still ? and such have no part with him ; and if he redeem us not from iniquity while here, shall we not be the servants of sin, whom ~~we~~ we may call workers of iniquity at the last day ? and if we continue in unbelief, it will not excuse us, for to say, that man told me I should do many things, and I feared to disobey him ; and I feared also to rely upon, and do the one thing needful ; even to depend upon the light and grace of God, because I felt so little of it in myself.

Alas ! poor soul, is not that unbelief ? is it not to fear, and obey man, rather than God ? (who likens his grace, to a grain of mustard-seed, or a little leaven,) was it not so with the Jews, who thought safer to place dependance upon man, and to follow him into many acts of bodily exercise, than wholly to confide in Christ, because he came in a way that appeared so mean and lowly in the eye of man's wisdom ? and so it is that his grace is slighted or overlooked (through unbelief,) even by many who speak great swelling words, and make a high profession of their faith and belief, in what the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and did

for us upon the cross, and of his mediation now, and for ever; which would be a blessed faith indeed, if people did believe as they say, (and imagine), but let no man deceive himself, for God will not be mocked (with an empty, high profession) who commands us to try, and prove our own selves whether we be in the faith; let us then deal honestly by our own souls, seeing that we are referred to the spirit of Christ in us, which alone should make us free, and therefore let us examine, whether we be in the faith which gives the victory? or whether we still desire to be in bondage to the beggarly elements, rudiments, and traditions of men, which cannot profit, and, which are set forth throughout the New Testament, as two opposite states? and therefore, if we be in the faith, must we not believe in Christ, so as to know him for ourselves, seeing that vengeance awaits such as know him not? (ii. *Thes.* i. 8)

And if we so believe, must we not see, in the first place, (by his light and grace,) the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and deceit of the heart, and believe in the mighty power of that little grain, to bruise the kingdom of sin and Satan in us, yea, to know the power of his cross, to crucify that in us, which crucified him, and finally, to have that raised into heavenly dominion, which prevails with God unto our justification, whereby we might say at seasons, from a living sense, "thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory!" but if we know nothing of this, only as we may

read, (or as others should tell us,) how then could we say, that we had a grain of living faith?

What will it avail us, to profess or talk of all that ever the Lord Jesus Christ did for us, or what he will do hereafter, if we believe not, or know not what he is, and what he would now do for us? oh! this now, what doth it mean? was it not there the Jews lost it, who spoke so precisely of what went before, and what they expected hereafter? oh! this word, now, how important! doth not the scripture say, that now is the accepted time? and again, to-day, to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts? but alas! how should we hear his voice, if we do not believe that such a voice is to be heard, but say, that now we must hear men, and that we should be afraid to trust the gift of God, even though we have his assurance, who saith, "hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you?" is not that the new covenant, even the law written in the heart, which we are to take heed unto? and is not that the covenant, which David in the Psalms, and the prophets foretold, should be given for a light to enlighten the Gentiles, yea, even God's salvation to the ends of the earth? is not that the unspeakable gift, which comes by Jesus Christ, which might well be called, glad tidings of great joy to all people? but what shall I say of Him, the one offering, (which fulfils all offerings,) even offered up by himself? who remains for ever the one high-

priest, shepherd, and bishop of souls, who would have us to choose that one thing needful, which fulfils and ends the many things, the gracious offer of which, if we should reject, and choose the many things, as the Jews did ; how then could we say that we receive Christ, and trust in him, if we cannot receive him as our all, and trust him for all, but should rather depend upon some great ones like the princes of this world ; and desire to be in bondage to their councils, their rudiments, and traditions ?

Would not that be going back to more beggarly rags than the people of Israel would be covered withal, against whom the wo was pronounced, because they took counsel, but not of me, and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, saith the Lord ; can ye read *Isaiah*, xxx. ? there we may see the portion which such procure for themselves ; but the Lord would not have it so, who saith, “ thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go ; oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” (*Isaiah*, xlviii.)

Objection—Some may say, that it is in order to bring me to Christ, that I depend implicitly upon men, and do so many things, as they may prescribe, and therefore, I should rather be commended for desiring to be in bondage thereunto.

Answer—Alas! what a pitiful shift would that be, whereby thou may miss of the gracious dealing of the Lord with thy own soul; who would shew mercy in the day of distress, if thou couldst look to none but him alone; but how should it provoke him to behold his creature, removing the heart so far from him, as to apply to his fellow mortal for a plaster to cure a wounded conscience, rather than confide in the Lord, who alone can deal soundly with the corruption thereof? which, if it should provoke divine justice, to give us over to a state of carnal security, so as to be unsoundly healed, by such as might cry, peace, peace, before we knew true peace with him who is the judge of quick and dead; alas! what greater curse could overtake us? does not the Lord require faith in himself? and wilt thou say, that I cannot confide in and follow him, until I first believe man, and know from him, whether it would be safe for me to trust the Lord alone, and to do the one thing which I ought to do, and to leave undone the many things which I ought not to do, seeing that is not the custom of the people?

Can any say, that they are true believers in Christ, (and that he hath made them free,) while they trust in man, and are in bondage to the fear of man? seeing that the Lord saith, “cursed be the man that trusteth in man;” and now, wherefore trust they in man? is it not because the men in whom they trust, have been set up and upheld by such as are of high repute amongst men, and

have great interest, and a great name in the world, and have long been shaking hands with such as have drank deep of the filthy intrigue, and foul deceit, which hath been practised by many of the great men of the earth, who account the proud happy? &c. and if any should desire to hear such, and be in bondage to their many inventions, rather than rely wholly upon the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for teaching and salvation, (which the Scripture saith, is all-sufficient,) can such say, that Christ hath made them free indeed?

And if they say, that they depend not upon men, because they are highly esteemed, but because Christ is revealed in them by his spirit, I would ask them again, whether that assertion does not refute itself? yea, would it not be to make God a respecter of persons, (who, Peter saith, is no respecter of persons,) and why not give his holy spirit as freely to the poor and lowly of this world, as to the princes thereof, even such as legates, delegates, or cardinals? &c. and is it because that such are set up and promoted by men, great of flesh, and of high account in the world, that therefore God should give of his spirit unto them above others? did he not say, that flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but the spirit? &c. and he saith, it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; and wherein lieth the difference between those great ones, and the poor of this world, except in that which ap-

pertains to the flesh? and therefore, why may not the holy spirit be poured forth as freely upon any of your selves, as upon those great Rabbies, unless ye deny the attribute of God? and is it not his peculiar attribute, that he is, and that he is no respecter of persons? and, “though heaven be his throne, and the earth his foot-stool, yet to that man will he look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word,” (*Isaiah lxvi.*) before whom the nations are but as a drop of a bucket; but have not those great ones, (to whom the people desire to be in bondage) taught them in effect, these many ages, that with God there is respect of persons? and so, by their works, if not in word, deny that attribute of God, while they darken and confuse the people with strange whimsies of his attributes? and do they not require them to believe things concerning the secrets which belong to God; which cannot be made out by scripture, and would be high presumption, for any mortal to attempt to define? whereby they have wofully corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ, and bewildered such as desire to be in bondage to their many inventions? but whether they affect such great insight into the secret things, which belong to God alone, in order to make the world believe themselves to be some great ones above other men? or whether they do it, in order to amuse the people from contemplating the attributes of God (unto his glory,) that so they may bring them into

bondage ; and a main attribute is, that with him there is no respect of persons, yet, which of these reasons may be the cause why they pervert the right way of the Lord, I must leave ?

Let none say to these things, that they know not how to do better, but let them rather acknowledge, that they knew better, but would not do it ; for the days of that ignorance, should ere now be by past and gone, wherein men would dare to say, that the Lord will respect any man, and reveal his mind and will unto him, because of his earthly wisdom, learning, pomp, or state ; or because that he is highly esteemed amongst men, and chosen by the great ones of the world, who would have their portion in this life ; how horrible would such a thought be, as if the Lord was no longer Almighty, but that men should steal away a main part of his heavenly prerogative, and all disposing power upon earth ? but that is a subject that I may touch but slightly, seeing that I could not do it justice, as this generation would not bear it, if I should but lay a finger, to touch that horrible and noisome thing, whereby the Lord hath been dishonoured, by the wise and high ones of this world, professing to reveal his secrets, as if they held a charter, to make merchandize of the mind and will of Heaven.

And let none say, that they cannot tell what this means, for who is there now, that have even heard of the name, and of the fame, of our Lord and his apostles, how that he, who made himself

of no reputation, and his followers, who followed his steps, who, though being poor, yet made many rich in heavenly treasure? I say, let the simplest individual that has heard tell of them, and also of many great learned rich rabbies, (unto whom the people desire to be in bondage), only compare such, with the servants of Jesus Christ, and give it one honest thought as in the sight of God; and then, no matter how simple, if the heart can draw an honest breath, it may discern, whether the modern Rabbies are now the same? is even their wisdom the same? have they got it from God, as the Apostles did? and their light, life, and glory, is it all heavenly? or do they now look for respect, reverence, or preferment amongst men? or is their treasure in heaven now, as it was with the saints of old, whose hands ministered to their temporal necessities, and having food and raiment, were therewith content?

And do they now labour (as the apostles did,) to turn the people only to the one thing needful, even to Christ in spirit, which Peter saith, is the only sure foundation, which God had laid, as a living stone, elect and precious, chosen of God, but disallowed indeed of men, (*i. Peter ii.*) so there we may see, that the Lord hath reserved the choice unto himself alone, and hath chosen the Son, and given him freely, that as many as receive him should become his children; who are born, not of flesh and blood, nor of the will or wisdom of man, but of God; but man doth indeed disallow that heavenly stone, because they know

him not, for he was (and is) the stone, which the wise master builders disallow unto this day, because they would make their own choice, in their own wills, who are born of flesh and blood and of the will of man.

And when they make their choice in the will of man, do they not belie the Lord, and say, that the choice is made according to his will, even while they disallow indeed, the thing that is chosen, precious, and well-pleasing in his sight, and make their choice in their own will, and say it is the will of God? which is a marvellous thing, that ever men should belie the Lord in such strange measure, as to set up in his own name, an earthly carnal succession, of great, monstrous, lordly princes, full of intrigue and subtlety, as the princes of this world, (whose ways shew, that they are after the flesh and the will of man.) whom they now call divines, great prelates, and Lords spiritual, &c. who might more fitly be called, Lords carnal, seeing that their ways and their pomp, are all clean contrary to the fruits of the spirit of Christ, (or the example which himself, and his followers left), yea, such as he never set up, being worse, and more outward and carnal than the Jews, who boasted that they were the chosen of God, because he chose the seed of Abraham, and such they said they were, though in the will of the flesh, and of man, who knew not that the Lord sees not as man sees, he looks at the heart; and Jesus told them, that they only were Abraham's children

who did the works of Abraham; and John saith, that God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham; and Abraham believed God and followed him, not knowing whither he went; and his faith is accounted for righteousness, (let us mind that,) for so must all his seed do, who do his works, and are of the true faith, they must believe God and follow him in spirit, (and not man, who knoweth not whither he goeth,) if ever they know the Son, to make them free indeed.

If the Jews, who were under the law of types, figures, and carnal ordinances, (even while they sat in Moses' seat,) were so severely rebuked, for claiming any thing, merely as the successors, or as the offspring of Abraham, how then should we escape, who profess the gospel, (which is the life and substance,) if we should fall into as gross, carnal, and outward notions of Christ's kingdom and government, as the Jews did in that day of great degeneracy, wherein the measure of their iniquity (as a nation) was filling up, and the last offers of mercy rejected by many of them? and it is remarkable, that one of the most tremendous charges which was set forth against them, even in that day, as we may read in *Matthew*, xxiii. &c. was, their dependance upon, and observance of many outward and legal rites and ceremonies, in which they rested, while they passed over the great work of the mercy and judgment of the spirit or grace of God in their own hearts, which would have brought forth fruits of mercy and

truth in their lives ; for the neglect of which, the Lord reproved and warned them many ways, not only by similitudes and parables, but more direct and pointedly, calling them hypocrites, saying, “ thou blind Pharisee ! cleanse first that which is within, that the outside may be clean also ; ” and, “ the good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things,” &c. shewing, that none is good but what is of his own good spirit ; and that therein, and not in man’s will or ordination, should stand his choice and election for ever, whereby an entrance should be ministered into the heavenly kingdom, as we may see plentifully treated of in the New Testament, which is written for our learning and admonition ; so that we are left without excuse, and great will be our condemnation, if we refuse his own free spirit, and desire to be in bondage to the many things which cannot profit, but may rather provoke the Lord, to withhold the light of his countenance from us, yea, to give some over to those things which they desire to serve and rest in, even to follow the works of their own hands, and the imagination of the heart.

Now if any say, (as likely they will,) that we read and understand these things very different ; yea, I know furthermore, that I have nothing to expect (from the self secure ones,) better than reproach and revilings, which I am prepared to receive, so as to be no ways thoughtful on my own account what I shall meet with, if I could,

(even though very feebly,) reach forth a little to the hungry soul, to whom every bitter thing is sweet, if I may thus express something of that yearning of soul, which I often feel for the simple-hearted, with desires, that the Lord may enlarge them into a heavenly sense of his willingness to do all their works in them and for them; and in throwing out these hints, I have no view to teach others, believing, that it is the Lord alone, (by his conviction in the conscience,) that can teach his people to profit, and lead them in the way that they should go, so that all I aim at, (as I said before,) is, to stir up the mind to a solemn examination of the ground of their standing, and the foundation on which they build; that they may consider in time, what they have been doing with their Lord's gifts, and whether they are prizing his mercies; seeing that it is an unspeakable mercy, that every one hath received a gift from God, according to their measure, and he requires that we should occupy therewith; which if we neglect, it will not do, to say, that that gift appeared to me so small and feeble, (and my temptations and propensity to evil so powerful,) that I could not depend upon it, and therefore, "I have been doing many things as men instructed me, and as I saw others, whom I thought wiser than myself, approve."

Come then, and stand upon thy feet, and answer; hast thou been busied hither and thither with many things, so as to slight or pass over the

one thing needful? and hast thou been in bondage to many dead words, so as to overlook the one living word, nigh in the heart, which would also give a true word in the mouth? and hast thou been in bondage to many meats, driuks, days, times, and divers washings, which hath caused thee to overlook the light and the day of Christ in thy soul, even that day which the Lord doth bless, which Abraham rejoiced to see, even the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, which giveth life unto the world, yea, the living food, that nourisheth the soul unto everlasting life, from him, who hath the living water, that whoso drinketh, thirst no more, but know it to be in them, a well, springing up unto eternal life? in a word, hast thou been in bondage to many men and their ways, so as to overlook Christ Jesus, the heavenly man, the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit, who is the one way to the Father, whom, though many call him Lord! Lord! and think to be heard for their much speaking, yet they do not his will, neither know his will, nor who he is? and he saith, that such he will not own; and how could they know him, who believe not that he is to be known, only as men reveal him, seeing that he himself saith, that no man knoweth him but as he is revealed by the spirit? and now, whether is it safer to believe and obey God or man, judge ye? that is the whole conclusion of the matter, it is all that I want to have considered.

All that I have been saying, or would say, hangs upon this one word, even whether we should believe God, or man? and if we believe God, we must believe, that none can know him, but those to whom he doth reveal himself; and if any say that “these are hard sayings, or how can these things be?” let such know, that they will ever appear hard indeed, unto all that desire to be in bondage unto man; and let them beware lest they be in bondage unto sin; for this know, that none can even reveal thy sin unto thee, (or shew thee what is sin,) but him alone, that would reveal the Saviour; so, there is the first step into the narrow way, which leadeth unto life, even to see thy sins, which God alone can shew, and set in order before thee; and it is he alone that can open thine eyes, to look upon him whom thou hast pierced, that so thou mayest see thy Saviour, who saith (in adorable compassion,) “look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.”

Oh! ye high professors, are ye so in bondage to the fear of man, as to be afraid to come unto Him, that he might set you free indeed? do ye think that a dangerous principle, tending to perplexity and distraction? Alas! would it not be far more dangerous, to be lulled asleep in a state of carnal ease and security, (though in a specious profession,) and desire to be in bondage to that, which cries peace, peace, unto the old man, and all his wares, which is sure to bring distraction

and perplexity in the end, if his goods be not spoiled? ah! saith my soul, that it may not (at last) be said unto you, that ye would not have his goods spoiled, nor his peace broken, even though it should be to make room for the babe immortal in the secret of the soul.

Would it not be a grievous event, if the free spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, (in the day of his great mercy to your souls,) should meet with no better reception from some of you, than he did from the Jews, in that glorious day of his personal manifestation unto Israel, when, though he walked among men, yet not many of the great and wise ones of the world would receive him? for they could not bear the plainness and simplicity of his appearance, which we may the less wonder at, when we reflect, that he was the truth, and they were in the deceit, looking for some great thing, according to outward appearance, and so they overlooked him, that is the truth, though he had charged them, and warneth us all, not to judge according to the appearance, but to judge righteous judgment, which, had they done, they should not have despised him because of the meanness of his bodily appearance, which was formed to confound the wisdom that could look no further than the outward appearance, which should be a solemn lesson unto us all, to beware of slighting or overlooking his grace, or good spirit, because of the smallness or weakness of its appearance, (according to our carnal apprehension,)

but if it be a righteous thing, and reprove all deceit and unrighteousness, then let us receive it and we receive righteous judgment, but if it can spare one lust or false deceitful thing, away with it, as being ^{of} the devil; for that was the way wherein the Lord desired the people to prove himself, (saying, which of you convinceth me of sin,) when in marvellous adorable condescension, he walked amongst them, saying, that except they repent they should perish, and if they could not believe him, he bids them believe his works; now if any who desire to be in bondage unto man, should say, that nevertheless we do not slight or reject the gift of God's grace in the soul, though we should prefer man's teaching, let such a one ask himself again, does he indeed believe it to be the gift of God? hath it been prized and esteemed as such? has it been received and believed in as his gift, and suffered to operate, so as to do the works that none other but the Lord alone could do? if not, let no man deceive himself, for if the Lord be God, he must be glorified as God, and if Baal (or man and his works) be God, such as serve them, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ.

If any should think this a dangerous principle, tending to perplexity and distraction, and say, that they can neither read, nor consider things in the manner herein set forth; I would only say unto such, canst thou read and consider freely, (as in the fear of God alone) without being in bondage to the fear of any man; then read what scrip-

ture thou pleaseth, in singleness of heart unto the Lord alone, without adding or diminishing ; and read the book of thy own conscience, with the light which the Lord doth give, that so thou mayest know thy own state and condition, and the will of God concerning thee ; as Paul directed the men of Athens, “ that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us ; for in him we live, move, and have our being ; and though he winked at the times of ignorance, yet now commandeth all men every where to repent,” (*Acts* xvii.) and if thou thus read and consider, with the honest and good heart, which can say availingly, “ God be merciful to me, a sinner,” then should I wish thee good speed with all my heart ; and therein alone, should esteem it a favour, to be counted worthy to have fellowship with all who thus love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, because he first loved us, and shewed us our sins, and calls us unto himself, the only Saviour ; and this I have further to say unto thee, that if ever thou comest thus in spirit and in truth, to read the wonderful things of his law written in thy heart, (according to scripture testimony,) as thou waitest upon the Lord in faith and patience, all his appointed time, thou mayst read what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God concerning thee.

And then thou wilt know, if thou shouldst see these lines, that they are according to truth, and

far from being too harsh or severe, but might rather say, that it is a very small part of what might be said, and that herein I have dealt gently as with a child ; and although there are here many words, the whole amounts to little more than a gentle call, to come and see, or to come taste and see how good the Lord is ; and be not therefore mockers, lest your bands be made strong, but look away for a moment from your mountain, even from the height of your high profession, and hear what a poor woman saith, who left her waterpot, and went into the city, saying, “ come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ ? ” yea rather, let us take example by the noble Samaritans, who neither thought meanly of her as a messenger, nor yet of Jesus, (who sat wearied at the well,) but said unto the woman, “ now we believe, not because of thy saying ; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world,” (*John* iv.) oh ! blessed knowledge, oh ! happy experience ; to have the conscience opened to see all the sins that ever we did, and to see the gift of repentance, and the blood of sprinkling, (which speaketh better things than that of Abel,) to sprinkle the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God ; and is it not a very small thing to say, come and see ? and to say, is there any other way for to see what the Lord Jesus did, and is doing, and will do ? and so to ascribe honour, and glory unto him that would wash us from our sins in

his own blood, and so make us free indeed, yea, unto the Lamb that was slain, and sitteth upon the throne, who is worthy for evermore.

, If ever ye come to see things as they really are, ye would then see, that it is very little indeed, that I can now write, because ye could not bear it, therefore I have dealt gently, according as ye might bear; seeing that if I should say but little of what I have seen and felt, ye could not bear it; if ye should only be told, that your mountain, even the height of all your profession, is in bondage, with all the children of every outside worship, (of what society soever,) for now there is none free, but such as are of Jerusalem, which is from above, where God is worshipped in the spirit and in truth; and now who could bear to be told of the Lord's controversy with all their outside things, which hath been devised to cloak up sin, whereby his name hath been dishonoured, and upon which his plagues are to be poured forth, yea, upon all that appertains to mystery Babylon, in whatever people or society? that which hath been erected, and set up by man, in the serpent's wisdom, for filthy lucre sake, which brought death, darkness, and bondage, over the nations, and dishonour unto the ever adorable name of Christ, is to be cast into the lake of the wrath of God, yea, all of man's work in religion, is to be broken up root and branch, that the Lord alone may be exalted in judgment, and God, that is holy, may be sanctified in righteousness; (and who now can bear to

have this fully spoken to,) whose voice from heaven calls unto his people, to come out of Babylon, that they partake not of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues, (*Rev. xviii.*) yea, so would he have them redeemed out of that state, which leads into the lake of his wrath, and that they might be prepared, to partake of the ocean of his love.

Oh, adorable love ! that loved us before we loved Him, and would have all to come unto himself in the day of their soul's visitation, even as in the day of his personal appearance upon earth, when he said unto those Jews which believed on him, " if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, we be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man ; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free ? Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin ; and the servant abideth not in the house for ever ; but the Son abideth ever ; if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed : " (*John viii. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36*) thus shewing by the most conclusive comparison, that no title, grant, or succession, ever did, nor ever would, give any claim or right to the divine inheritance, further than as they were made free from sin, which the Lord alone can do ; who hath said, that sin should inevitably exclude from his favour, yea, even as he saith, " verily, verily, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin ;

and the servant abideth not in the house for ever," (mark that,) "but the Son abideth ever."

And now if we cannot see this, it is because we wilfully close our eyes, seeing how the Lord condescended to reason with those Jews, who claimed something to themselves on account of the solemnity and sanctity of the law, and the promises of God made unto their fathers, saying "we know that God spake unto Moses;" (whose children and successors they were,) but the Lord so severely struck at their rotten, blasphemous confidence, that he saith, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," (and they were zealous of the law,) yet, "ye are of your father, the devil, because his lusts ye do;" and seeing, that none can set us free from his lusts, but Christ alone, would it not be as dangerous now, to slight or reject his free spirit, and depend upon any man or thing, as it was for them to have slighted his appearance, in the body, by their attachment to old outside things? and now, is it not his gracious language unto all who believe in his coming in the spirit, that, if they continue therein, (according to his promise,) they should be made free? and can any say that they have faith in Christ, who do not believe in the promise of the pouring forth of his spirit upon all flesh, (or upon mankind, without distinction or respect of persons,) which was an especial effect of his coming? and if any believe not in the effect of his coming, how can they say, that they believe in Christ? would not that be like

saying, I believe, and yet I believe nothing? seeing that Jesus saith, "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." (*John* vi: 63.)*

I am the more earnest about this particular, because that it is very easy for a great multitude to say, "we believe;" yea, and to do many things, for even Herod heard John gladly, and did many things, and expressed a great desire to see Christ; but what then? he would not part with his beloved sins, and so set all at nought; and now, many are saying a deal about faith in Christ, yea, and doing many things, but it is quite another matter for us to believe that Christ is what he is, for that is his name, even as the Lord who changeth not, said unto Moses, when he appeared to redeem Israel out of Egypt's bondage, he said unto them through Moses, "I am, that I am, this is my name;" (but Pharaoh knew

* As for any who now claim a line of succession from the Apostles, though according to men, who are after the flesh, desiring to bring the people into such bondage, as to bow down to the abomination of their fictitious genealogies and traditions; let them see to it, for God will not be mocked, who hath declared, that sin should inevitably exclude from his house; nay, hath he not said, that "the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever?" (*John* viii.) And seeing that Jesus remains for ever an high-priest over the house of God, (*Heb.* x.) who art thou then, that would usurp his prerogative? And seeing that it is the glory of Christ's kingdom, that he would make his people free indeed, who are ye then that would be brought into bondage to any man? could any thing tend more to the dishonour of Christ, the Prince of Life and of Peace, or to the degradation of his people?

him not by that name, and so was hardened ;) and it is written, that he that cometh unto God, the Redeemer, (who said to the Jews, “ before Abraham was, I am,) must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (*Heb. xi. 6*)

Wherefore, if ye believe not that he is, and that he is all and all unto the believer, away with your pretension to faith in Christ, or in what he did and suffered, and is in heaven, and will do hereafter; but if ye believe that he is, ye must know him (in measure) by that name, and he is not an unknown God unto such as so believe in his free spirit, even that he is now standing at the door, disposed to make you free, as he was those Jews; for now he saith, “ behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,” (*Rev. iii. 20.*) let us mark that, (if any man hear my voice, and open the door,) he does not say, if this, or the other orders of men, hear my voice, but if any man, &c. and therefore, if any refuse to stand open to the manifestation of his free spirit, like as the Jews did, in that day wherein he would have gathered their children together, but they would not; and now in like manner, if we would not, let us beware lest we charge the Lord with being the author of that state of bondage, which we may bring upon ourselves, by desiring to be in bondage unto the outward court worship.

And if we say, that there is no better, (or purer) condition in store for the believer, would not that be to charge the Lord with slackness concerning his promise unto the last (or gospel) days, seeing that to uphold such things for filthy lucre sake, is an abomination? and such as uphold them are in bondage to the elements, yea, and in bondage unto sin, let them have never so great zeal, yea, even though their zeal might be like that of Saul, who (before his eyes were opened) bestirred himself in great fury, in favour of the outward court-worship; but alas, alas, can those who uphold it at this day, say as Paul could? viz. “ I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly.”

And when his eyes were opened (by that great mercy,) immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, but was obedient to the heavenly vision, though he might have had much greater reason to confer with flesh and blood, than any now-a-days can plead; as he might have reasoned upon the solemnity of the law of Moses, with the authority and antiquity of the Jewish nation; the numerous genealogies of their fathers, prophets, kings, chief priests and scribes, &c. all upon his side, and he tenacious of the law in which he had been educated; but immediately he left all, and gave up to the heavenly vision, and so believed God, who made him a chosen vessel, to persuade people, to come and partake of the like precious faith, that they also might be made free, as he saith, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from

the law of sin and death; and at the winding up of all, he saw through the same spirit, that there was a crown of righteousness laid up for him, (mind that, the crown was righteousness,) which the Lord, the righteous judge should give him, and not to him only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (ii. *Tim.* iv. 8.)

Oh! how well would it be for many, if they did love the appearance of that which would smite them down to the ground, even the light of Christ, which alone could shew them, how that all the career of the old man, tendeth to bondage, and none but the Lord Jesus can set free therefrom; who saith, I am the truth, and the truth shall make you free; so we may see, that it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which maketh free from the law of sin and death, and so, free from conferring with flesh and blood, and from the fear of man, which bringeth a snare; and so, if the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed; free from all that gendereth to bondage; free from the enticing words which man's wisdom teacheth for filthy lucre sake; and so, free from the serpent and his wisdom, and from the cunning craftiness, whereby men lie in wait to deceive and to beguile from the simplicity which is in Christ; from all of which, the Son should make free, yea, free from words without life, and vain repetitions; as he saith of the heathen, that they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; *Matt.* vi) and chargeth his disciples "not to be like unto them, for your Father knoweth what

things ye have need of before ye ask him ;” and so, if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed ; free to wait upon the Lord without distraction, and to receive with patience (or meekness,) the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul ; and so the Son should make you free indeed, free from saying, who shall ascend, or descend, or go over the sea for to bring the word unto us, (that we may hear it and do it,) for the word is very nigh unto thee, even in thy heart and mouth, (and not beyond the sea,) (*Deut. xxx. Rom. x.*) if thou couldst but believe, and so hear it, and do it ; and that is the one ingrafted word, which would make free from the many words of man’s invention, and free from going over the seas, after the words or decrees of great men, who have committed fornication with the kings of the earth.

What shall I say, is it not enough, that the truth should not only make free from sin, and all its consequent bondage, but would also make free unto righteousness and true holiness, the end of which is everlasting life ? and so, if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed, yea, free to believe and receive the gift of God ; and as every one hath received the gift, even so to minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, (*i. Peter iv. 10.*) and so, free in the grace and gift of God, that if any thing be revealed to one that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace, and the other should be free

to speak in the congregations, as in the apostles' days, (i. *Cor.* xiv. 30.) so all that are in the truth, are free in Christ, for if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed; free to worship God in spirit, and to have no confidence in the flesh, (*Phil.* iii. 3.) neither in any thing that is of the flesh or will of man; then should ye be free indeed for to give God all the glory, to whom it is only due, yea, to ascribe unto him all the praise of sustaining many of you under various tedious toils and privations in this life, and so should be made free from ascribing any thing to your own merits, or to the works of man, being free to adore the providence of God, (whereby ye have been sustained, and enabled to endure your allotment,) whose care is even toward the fowls of the air, and every part of his creation, yea, he is kind to the unthankful; how much more then, unto such as believe in his power, to redeem from that bondage under which the whole creation groaneth? if haply they continue steadfast in the hope, waiting for his spirit, whereby alone we can cry, Abba, Father, (*Rom* viii) and seeing that many of you have suffered sorely under that bondage through which the creation hath groaned; I have often felt strong and ardent desires for your complete emancipation, not only from under the power of priestcraft, but from every obstruction which may stand opposed to to your livingly and experimentally adopting the language in your own experience, even that " God

bath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith," &c.

But if ever ye become rich in faith, and heirs of the promise, remember that ye are now told, as ye may have often heard, even as ye may read in the holy scriptures, and by the light in your own consciences, that ye must fear God, and give the glory unto him, and not unto man, and take heed unto his word nigh in the heart, which the apostles preached, even the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give an inheritance among the sanctified; and that is the universal word, which brings into the universal spirit and religion of Jesus; and so it is no private thing, neither is it of man, but of God, freely offered unto all; and therefore, if ye take heed unto that free universal word, ye should not be saying,—who will ascend, or descend, or go over the sea to bring the word unto us, or to bring the decrees or council of great men, that we may do them? for the decrees of men are particular, and from some private people or nation, but the word of God is universal and infallible: but alas! how narrow and fallible, are the words and decrees of men, especially those of great men, who may have drunk deep, yea, be drunken even with the deceit, subtlety, and intrigue, which is practised by the princes of this world, who know not God; and if such say they know him, would not that make their case the more desperate, and your case also, who build them up in iniquity, by giving them a sort of

honour, which never belonged to any man, even desiring to be in bondage to them and to their decrees, as if the Lord had altered his mind, and did now chuse such as them, before the poor and despised of this world, though rich in faith? and would it not be to think of the Lord as we would of corrupt men, that he should also, (like ourselves,) have respect to the greatness, state, or antiquity of any people, nation, or order of men?*

* The Lord, who knew how prone we are to be looking without for that which is to be found within, hath warned us to beware of such as say, see here, or see there is the people, or the place, where Christ is to be found; he chargeth us not to go after them, nor follow them, for behold, (he saith,) “the kingdom of God is within you;” and as the lightning that shineth from the east unto the west, so should his coming be; thus setting forth the universality and efficacy of his spirit, yea, even as “from one end to the other under heaven;” and as he would have none mistaken unless they wilfully close their eyes; he shews where it is to be found, saying, “behold, the kingdom of God is within you;” and so warns us against looking abroad for it, or going after such, as say, “lo, it is here; or lo, it is there.” (*Matthew*, xxiv. *Luke*, xvii.)

Could any language more powerfully warn us against depending upon such as say, that the knowledge of Christ can only be found here or there, in some certain place or nation, seeing that he himself saith, that it is only to be found within, even revealed in man by the spirit of God, who is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and that is the one free universal religion, which he would set up, (as extensive as from one end under heaven to the other end thereof;) and not a private religion, to be derived from some particular state, nation, or people; for surely he did set aside old Jerusalem, (which, with her children, was in bondage,) in order to set us a gazing after Rome, Greece, Constantinople, London, or Canterbury, or any other private or particular

Oh! I am concerned for the poor amongst you, (who have laboured and had patience in your allotment,) that ye may not be beguiled of your reward through a voluntary humility, or a worshipping of any thing short of the living and eternal God and Saviour, even though it appear as an angel, (*Col. ii. 18.*) or never so glorious in its place, but alas! if ye desire to be in bondage unto that which may be polluted by the deceivableness

people, place, nation, mountain, or temple; nay, but in spirit and in truth, which is the way of his universal standing religion, even as extensive as from one end to the other under heaven, of the spirit, and in the spirit, and not of flesh and blood, nor of the will of man, neither of any people or nation; for who would now say, that the Lord set aside the seed of Abraham and Israel after the flesh, in order to make way for, and set up, a more carnal succession of great lordly prelates, whose fruits shew them to be of flesh and blood, and after the will of man?

And the Apostles saith, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; (*ii. Peter, i. 20.*;) but by manifestation of the truth commended to every man's conscience in the sight of God; (*ii. Cor. iv. 2.*) and so will be found suitable to the state and condition of every one that reads in simplicity and sincerity, without labouring to know any thing, but to feel after the sincere milk of the word from whence they did proceed, which would tend to gather the mind into a sense of the same life and spirit, while all the subtle expositions of men, would only tend to scatter from Christ the good shepherd. And surely, that must be a private interpretation indeed, which men arrogantly claim to themselves, who say, that the free use of the Scriptures should not even generally extend to one society of people, but should be exclusively confined to only one order of that society, who alone are capable to shew the meaning thereof; what then is become of pure gospel light and liberty?

of unrighteousness which is in the world, and the more so, in such as desire the friendship of the great ones thereof, and what if they should even speak lies at their table, (if so be) that they flatter great men, and so, practice deceit, by having their persons in admiration because of some advantage, yea, even men, whose very best grace may be full of filthiness of deceit, which the Lord abhors? and if ye should depend upon such, and be partakers of their deceit, rather than rely purely and simply in faith, upon the living God, would it not provoke him, to withdraw his light, grace, and free spirit from you, because of unbelief? whereby ye may be robbed and spoiled of the reward of your patience and long suffering, which reward is in store for all who love the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, who would not only make all that believe in him free indeed, but give freely of the heavenly treasure, where nothing can corrupt nor destroy.

But let none deceive themselves by saying, that they believe in and love his appearance (in perfection), while they desire to be in bondage, and are doating after, and looking abroad, for the appearance of the decrees and council of great men, because of their exaltation, or high renown in church dignity, while they seek their portion in this life, desiring to be thought great and good, and to be called of men Rabbi, &c. even such as the Lord cried wo unto; and how can men say in truth, that they love the appearing of Jesus

Christ, who saith wo be unto the very thing which they love, and would uphold? oh! the Lord is a God of truth and of righteousness, and if ever ye know him and love his appearing, this is the name by which ye must know him, even by this, “the Lord our righteousness;” and if ye love his appearing, ye must love righteousness, and hate iniquity, and then might the Lord be called your God, and ye his people, and not otherwise; for now his law is not to be written upon stone, nor his temple built with hands; but he writes his law in the heart, where he builds his temple without hands; and that is the glory of his building, even that it is his own work, though man would dishonour him, by taking the work into his own hand, as if the Lord was not able to effect his own purpose.

And if the scripture saith, that “he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God, (*Rom. ii. 28. 29.*) how much more then is he no Christian, who is only one outwardly, in the letter, and not in the spirit? and if they should be seeking the praise of men, and looking after high and exalted stations in their churches, in order to be thought somebody amongst men, hath not the Lord said, *woe be unto such*? and if we should desire to be in bondage unto them, even such bondage, as to fear to examine whether these

things are so, how great would be our condemnation, seeing that we are commanded to beware of men, and know them by their fruits, and to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good? and now, if we should fear, and trust them rather than God, what think ye, will it serve the turn, to thrust away all seriousness, by calling it religious fanaticism and innovation, or such like deriding names, as the wise scribes, and outside Pharisees, (who were in the deceit and self-security,) called our Lord and his followers?

The Pharisees were exercised in outside things, and all that look no further, go into the broad way which leadeth to destruction, and many went in their way, but the Lord and his followers, insisted upon an inward work, a heart work; to have the heart made honest and good, that so, out of the good treasure of the heart, they might bring forth that which is good, as he saith "thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within, that the outside may be clean also," (*Mat. xxiii*) and that is the straight and narrow way, which leadeth unto life, and the Lord saith, few there be that find it, but he calls all, to come into the straight and narrow way, which is the way of true liberty and freedom to all that go therein; and he invites all who labour and are heavy laden, to come unto him, and take his yoke upon them, that so he might give them rest; oh! that is the blessed mystery, hid from all the great, the wise, and prudent of this world, who think that

they are free, even while they know not what freedom or bondage is, being too wise to know either, for, not being in the narrow way, (in which is enlargement,) nor having taken the yoke upon them, which maketh free, they know it not; it is foolishness unto all who seek that without, which is to be known within.

But it is the poor that my heart yearns unto, with earnest desires, that they may know for themselves, the Son to make them free, that many of them, who are the poor of this world, may be rich in faith, and heirs, &c. and this hint I may leave by the way, that if ye be rich in faith, ye will have the signs thereof following; even that any deadly thing, which ye may have drank, should not hurt you, though ye should vomit it out in great anguish, when in faith ye behold Him whom ye pierced, and know his blood, which is given for the life of the world, and by his faith the evil spirits, yea, all evil should be cast out now, as really as he cast out devils when on earth, and he would loose that which Satan had bound; yea, the dead should be raised, and a new life and sensibility received, whereby ye could say indeed and in truth, "now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb; by this we believe that thou comest forth from God," &c. or like unto the Samaritans who could say, "now we believe, not because of what others have said of him, for we have heard him ourselves, and know, that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world;" oh! that many of the poor amongst you, were so loos-

ed from the bonds of men, as thus to become rich in faith, and free heirs of the kingdom.

I have mourned over your state and condition (at seasons,) for more than twenty years, with strong desires, that none should beguile you of the reward of your labour, patience, and perseverance, and that ye might be preserved from ascribing the cause of your being so sustained, to any thing of man, or to any righteousness of your own, but unto the Lord alone; yea, and if ye should have to acknowledge, that many of you, have been a stiff-necked people unto this day, should ye not then, deeply ponder the cause for which ye may have been so sustained, even through divers sore trials and privations, for many years, though some of it, ye may have procured unto yourselves, by your own unfaithfulness? yet, seeing that ye have been so sustained, is it not for some wise purpose? and if that purpose should be, that the offer of his love may yet be extended to you, in yet a larger measure than heretofore?

And if a more glorious day, even a day of reformation should yet be offered unto you, beware that ye thrust it not away from you, so as to prove yourselves unworthy of such a blessing, even while ye may be anxiously careful about that which may do you no service, nor render you capable of being useful in the world in your present state; but that a reformation ye may yet witness, and that it may yet spring out from amongst you, as did before, by knowing him, that would make

you wiser than all your teachers, which would be your greatest glory, and truest, yea, (everlasting) interest, even though now it may seem so exceeding grievous to you, for to think of thoroughly amending your ways and your doings, by ceasing from man, and seeking the Lord for yourselves, while yet he may be found, and calling upon him (in faith) while he is near, that so he may shew what he would have you to do; who hath chosen the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him (*James ii. 5.*)

And seeing that many, who have not only professed the reformation, but had also known something of his appearing, hath turned aside after the love of this present world, and so prove themselves unworthy of that unspeakable blessing; that some of you, may yet leave your mountain, and look beyond the height of all your outside worship; yea, look unto him who saith, that now the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; that so, ye may yet more worthily espouse the glorious cause of the Redeemer's kingdom in the soul; which many that so professed, have wofully let fall to the ground, as respects themselves; and seeing that the Lord will raise up a people, to shew forth his praise, and magnify his power and the greatness of his grace; oh! that ye may not withstand, or let slip, his glorious in-gathering, but that many of you, may yet praise him, for his long forbearance to you

ward, by receiving him, who stands at the door knocking, that ye may not stout it out to the last, but open the door, that he, who is the heir of life, may be let into his own inheritance in you ; yea, that ye may knock, that so he may open unto you, to your unspeakable felicity, and finally, that he may be glorified, when that eye is opened in you, which can behold his long forbearance to you ward.

And that is the eye, that can behold Jerusalem a quiet habitation, even the eye that can see the new Jerusalem, which is free, and cometh down from God out of heaven ; yea, and that is the eye, which can see, how the old Jerusalem is now in bondage with her children, and all her outside things, the work of men's hands (in religion ;) which the Lord abhors, who will only approve his own work, even his own righteousness, the robe that is made white and clean in his own blood, (his pure life slain from the foundation of the world,) and so prepared for an union with himself, who is the head of her that is free, with her children, (though in outward tribulation or affliction,) and none is free beside ; for he only is a freeman, whom the truth makes free ; and so, if the truth make you free, then are ye free indeed, and these alone, are the Lord's freemen and free women ; who can pray indeed and in truth, for his kingdom to come, that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and that the will of man, with all his dark earthy dead works,

may be judged down, by Him, who is the prince of life and of peace, which though slain, yet is risen, and hath all power in heaven and earth; who will come to judge all that appertains to Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, in whatsoever nation or society; for that spirit, which hath so long held a reign of bondage and death over the pure life in the soul, is to be cast into the lake of the wrath of God, that it may not always deceive the nations, and hold them in chains of darkness, but must be judged by him that is the judge of quick and dead, that his Saints may rejoice and give glory unto the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain, and is worthy, thus to judge, who is the first and the last, that liveth, and was dead, and lives for evermore, to whom with the Father through the Holy Spirit, be dominion and glory, and may his own works praise him, world without end; Amen.

SECTION IV.

An earnest Appeal to the Rulers of these Realms ; coming from one of the meanest of their Subjects, who fervently desires, that they may yet be ordered aright, even in righteousness,—that so, grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied amongst them, and the nations over which they preside.

OH! ye Rulers of the nations! see that ye rule for God, and for his honour, and unto his glory, which should redound to your solid peace and comfort, while all the empty frothy praise and adulation that men could heap upon you, would only tend to vanity and vexation of spirit: what avails the pomp and honour of this world which passeth away like a dream, the awakening out of which, would be in fearful amazement, if no good account can be given of your stewardship?

How awful is the case of the unjust steward, who wasted his Lord's substance? which, though it be of deep spiritual import, may also apply to the disposing of the things of this world, of which the Lord, the possessor of heaven and earth should have the pre-eminence, and unto him reference should be had in all things, that so, in his fear and

dread ye might govern ; and first of all, as good examples in the sight of the people, which should lead into true moderation in all things : but if the rulers should be seen to waste and pervert the good things of the creation of God, by running into the pomps and vanities of the world, would not the evil influence of their example, have a powerful tendency to corrupt the Nation by emboldening the people in iniquity ? and so, if they should prove themselves unfaithful in the temporal stewardship committed to their trust, would they not thereby prove themselves unworthy of the Lord's enduring substance, even of the true riches and righteousness, which is the portion of the pure heart, and the good conscience, of faith and love unfeigned, whereby the heavenly treasure may be laid up in the bag which waxeth not old ? and that such treasure may be the portion of the rulers of these realms, is my earnest fervent desire ; even for all who are in authority, that so we may come to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

And moreover, he must be a thoughtless subject, or void of right understanding in such matters, who is not aware, that the duties and responsibility of those in authority are exceeding great and arduous, and that a nation may be said to owe much indeed, unto the rulers who govern righteously in the fear of God, and so order the affairs of the state with a good conscience toward God and man ; such are worthy of all the

honour and esteem which is due to their place and stations, howbeit they have only done that which was their duty to do, which would be rewarded with the crown of solid and enduring peace, far outweighing all the glitter and pomp, or the treasures of this world, which (at best) are but momentary and uncertain.

How exceeding great and high is that trust, which is committed unto the rulers, who govern such a nation as England (and the realms attached thereunto,) inasmuch as, that amongst the numerous inhabitants thereof, there are very many precious tender, enlightened minds? and I hope also, that amongst those who govern, there is still a good thing in some of their hearts, partly for the sake of which, the Lord hath lengthened their day, and spared the state hitherto, even while his wrath was ready to kindle and break forth, because of the mixture, yea, even because of the deceit which abound amongst them, insomuch, that many a precious soul, adores his mercy, in a sense of his great forbearance and long suffering unto us-ward, (even while other nations had been sorely smitten,) which hath not been according to our desert, but according to the multitude of his mercies, and as partakers of such great mercy, the people at large must be included; but while we adore his mercies, shall we dare to forget his judgments, which are righteous altogether, seeing that he will in no wise acquit the guilty, except they repent and amend their ways and their doings?

But how shall I attempt even to touch upon such a subject, who am but dust, and can hardly compare myself to a worm ; for I seem only like dust ; and if I should say any thing, it looks like crying out of the dust, and out of the ground, and shall therefore aim at being short as I can, and may briefly confine these remarks to one simple subject, which I know will appear (to most,) the fruit of perverse rudeness and ignorance, and may be thought the wild raving of a poor busy unsettled brain ; yet that may not excuse me : I wish well to my country and the government, and I am not insensible of the value of the constitution, so far as respects the general privilege and liberty which we enjoy, I mean (above all,) that liberty of conscience which we now enjoy, beyond what we read of former times, or what may be at this day in many other countries ; so that I do not know where there is any nation more favoured in that respect ; that it has often appeared to me, that these realms have been spared, on account of the toleration allowed to the free exercise of tender conscience toward God, which I believe is so far according to his will, that he hath not yet given us up as a prey to those nations which have manifested less regard for the freedom of tender conscience.

Nevertheless, there are yet many things which lie heavy on the land, because of which the creation groans even unto this day, which I may not attempt to enumerate, yet shall offer a few sim-

ple hints upon one subject in which very much may be involved, as it hath appeared to me (for many years) to be one great cause of heaviness and dimness of sight; and I believe will be increasingly a cause of perplexity, and of clogging the wheels of right government, so long as the evil remains, because I believe, and what if I should say, that I have felt the righteous controversy of heaven going forth against it, insomuch that I fear, unless ye amend, amend your ways and your doings in that respect, that plagues and perplexities will follow, and that ye cannot see to rule for the Lord in truth and righteousness, over his great nation and people, until ye first do right in this matter; yea, put away the evil of your doings in this respect; seeing that ye want clean hands, for men of clean hands shall grow stronger, even though the rebellious should rage and cast up mire and dirt.

And this know, oh ye rulers! that it is no light matter to rule such a nation as England, where the Lord would have a great and a righteous people, that should shew forth his truth and righteousness, yea, shew forth his praise unto the nations afar off; but if they follow lying vanities, and so prove themselves unworthy of such an high and holy calling, he can blast all their measures and their projects, and raise up a people (to shew forth his praise,) even from among the dark and benighted nations of the earth; for the Lord will have a great people:

and this know, that the thing that is great, and good, and right in the sight of God, doth not in any wise consist in the pomp or greatness of this world, but in truth and righteousness, which should bear rule in the right ordering of the affairs of this world, (yea, even in temporal and state affairs;) and the fruits of righteousness can only be brought forth out of the honest and good heart, where there is a measure of truth in the inward parts, which the Lord hath respect unto, who cannot be deceived with specious false pretences, but in his own way and time, will rend in pieces all false coverings, even though they should appertain to things as high as church and state. He that breaketh the rock in pieces, and rendeth the mountains, will rend false coverings in sunder, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and it is his light alone which can shew, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and it is his power alone that can plough it up so as to make it honest and good, which all the power of the princes of this world or the wisdom thereof could never do.

Therefore, oh ye rulers and heads of the nation! be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong, but hear what is said unto you as out of the very dust of the earth, for the Lord hath spoken unto you many ways, not only by his conviction in your consciences, but also by his judgments and tender mercies, and by the dreadful shaking of the rod, could ye but hear him, who

I believe would still shew great mercy, if ye did unfeignedly repent and amend your ways and your doings ; and it seems to be sealed upon my mind, that ye cannot thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, unless ye are made willing, first of all, to take heed and beware of covetousness ; yea, to cease from covetousness ; and that is the subject I aim at bringing into view, whereupon I shall offer a few simple hints, and expect to confine these remarks (principally) to those things which are the fruits and effect of covetousness ; but shall try to be very short, as I am well aware that much has been said about it, though I fear to very little purpose : and if they would not hear the wise men, (who can speak, and know much of these things,) how should they hear the fool, who cannot speak, and knows nothing of state affairs ? nor have I ever been a meddler, or a busy body, not even so much as to read news-papers, which they that know my manner of life can bear me witness

And yet I have a sense, and a mind, that can feel, and deeply deplore the state of things in those very highly favoured (yet oppressed) nations ; and repeat, that it is my fixed belief and conviction of mind, that if ever the rulers order things aright, in the true fear and dread of the living God, they must pay much less to those who rule and manage the affairs of the state than they have done, (or now do,) that so, the rulers may (in the first place) shew forth a good example

of moderation, temperance, and honesty ; not using their power as a cloak of covetousness, or a means to aggrandize themselves before the people, like the old heathen rulers, who were so blind, as to think, that true honour, strength, and dignity, consisted in worldly pomp and show ; so thought Herod, who (with his men of war,) set the Lord at nought.

It seems like as if it had been thought highly honourable, and a mark of great talent, and of a high princely mind, to show forth great skill and dexterity in wasting the good creatures of God upon their ungodly lusts, after pride and vain glory, and so, if they appear notable in destroying the good things of his creation, oh ! then, they are exalted and extolled, and looked up to as men of rank and talent, fit to govern, seeing that they know how to waste the creation of God, and destroy his good creatures with a great grace ; such are called men of rank, fit for high stations, and places of great trust, and so must have their thousands a year in proportion to such rank ; because they display (what in Babel is called) the noble faculty, of wasting and destroying God's creatures with a great grace ; and moreover they must be trust-worthy, and qualified for places of high trust in the state, seeing that they never yet scrupled to take all that was offered them, which proves them to have virtue, like the covetous priests, who could never have enough.

Now suppose the conduct of your great coun-

cils of state, should speak a language like this, (though they might deny it in words), what think ye? would the Lord own and enlighten such assemblies, or guide them by his counsel, by giving them his good spirit to instruct them, as he did unto the Jews under the law, whereby they were designed to be examples of righteousness, and even to make war with iniquity, and to show forth his glory, and the riches of his grace, and the power of his dreadful name, unto the heathen far and near? and if so much was looked for from the Jews under the law, even in that outward dispensation of types and figures, wherein the law was written upon stone, and the temple built with hands, (which was a shadow of the good things to come,) how much more then, is required of the Christian, and the government which should be set up by those who profess Jesus Christ, the substance of all types and figures, whose temple is made without hands, his law written in the heart, and his spirit in the inward parts, which is the promise unto his own, to the end of the world? and thousands at this day can testify, that he is not slack concerning his promise, which they witness fulfilled unto them, and in them, according to their measure and the obedience of faith; and can any thing short of a measure of the same spirit, light and grace, (which comes by Jesus Christ) qualify men, and enable them, to rule and govern his people in righteousness, and to order all things committed to their care (in the

creation,) unto the glory of God, by whom all things were made and created, and by whose wisdom they must be ordered, if they are ordered aright unto his glory?

But do not all such rulers dishonour Christ, who run greedily after gain, so as to take all that was offered to them, and want great enormous incomes, twice as much as should be needful? which also might have a tendency to make themselves and families, high and wanton in the world, as if they supposed, that that should gain them respect and esteem; and have not such thought it needful, to look out for the greatest and most refined schools that can be found in Babel—no matter what the expense may be, provided that they should be learned to practise dissimulation with such ease, as though it was natural to them, and so, get wrought upon, as by a sort of habitual enchantment, so as not to be disturbed by the greatest sin or abomination, but to appear as happy amidst the deceitful works of Satan, as if it had been the truth of God, no matter to them which, provided that all be set off with (what they call) a good grace and superior style? that so, whenever they should find occasion to cheat, or in other words, to take advantage by intrigue, they may be qualified to counterfeit the highest air of sincerity, and greatness of mind and talent; now I would ask again, what think ye? could such wisdom in statesmen, bear rule for the lasting good and felicity of a nation, or for the glory of

Jesus Christ, who saith, I am the truth and the way, and he abhors all manner of deceit, (which is of the devil,) in which a state can never prosper, unless it be to lift it up, that so the fall thereof might be the greater? for the judgments of God will assuredly overtake such works, with every secret sin; and I have a deep sense upon my spirit, that the Lord is provoked because of these things, which spread darkness even at this day, when light should be arising.

And now respecting that wisdom, which teacheth, that great enormous revenues, (increasing with time, and established by vain custom,) should be needful and good, for the honour, advantage, and security of the state, and good for the ruler or statesman, who may receive such abundance beyond measure, what think ye? from whence cometh such wisdom? is it not from beneath, even earthly, sensual, devilish? for if it be out of the heavenly moderation, which should appear unto all men, is it not therefore earthly? and if not free from covetousness, it is so far sensual? and so, if a destroying principle, is it not devilish? and may not over much wealth destroy him to whom it is given? (which has been proved in a former section;) and first, may it not destroy his integrity, if he should receive much more than is right to be paid for any certain office in the state? can such be strictly called an honest man, who gets ten times more than he earns or needs, and yet never refuses, or reports it to be too much?

I know that we may be told, that both custom and common usage will acquit him thoroughly, but the query should be, whether conscience would acquit him if duly attended unto? and now, as it seems needful to use some singular manner of speech, in order to excite attention to the subject, therefore, if I may be allowed to offer a comparison, (though it may only serve as an illustration of what I aim at,) I would say then, suppose that a merchant, farmer, or mechanic, should do, or supply with their wares, in a case, wherein the receiver might not know the real value, (but being of a liberal mind,) should say, I have been so or so much benefited, and therefore offer ten times the real value; think ye, that such merchant, &c. would be thought an honest man, to receive such surplus, knowing that his benefactor could have been as well supplied for one tenth of the charge?

But I cannot enter into many particulars, wherein over much, may tend to the destruction of him to whom it is given, how that it might lift him up, so as to disqualify him for ruling in righteousness, and in the fear of the Lord; for if he should be overloaded with wealth, can he also bear the great weight of public affairs, while his own concerns may be too heavy already? and if he has gotten too much, and a mind disposed to be drawn into many foolish and hurtful things, and lusts, which drown men in destruction, while they may have plenty of money to bear all the expensive rounds of parties,

operas, theatres, or other expensive vanities, whatever they may be called? which, though they may qualify a man, to cringe, caper, deceive, and appear very fine in all his deportment and reasoning, yet may destroy that noble faculty, whereby he should be enabled to rule in the wisdom and fear of God, so as to have his ways ordered of the Lord, as the good man's ways must be, who is capable of ordering the affairs of a state, to the glory of God, and the good of the public weal.

But to come plainly and simply to the point, (which I attempt with great reluctance,) let us suppose then, that an officer of the state, may be allowed three thousand pounds a year, what think ye? would he not be much better every way, with only one thousand a year? I say more independent—more like a man, a rational being, and of course, more like a Christian, and more honourable in the state? better able to discharge his trust for the public weal, with singleness of heart and cleanness of hands as in the sight of God? now what think ye, that a man who is such a novice, or so indolent, as not to order his own private affairs, so as to be able to live cheerfully and honourably upon one thousand a year, is such a man fit to order public affairs in a great reformed christian state?

And again, suppose an inferior officer had two hundred pounds a year, would he not, or should he not, be full as comfortable with one hundred? so that the sum and substance of these remarks

may be wound up in this query ; that is, whether ye may not find, choice, honest, efficient men, for all offices of the state ? and also, whether ye may not destroy such men, and make them rather a burthen than a help, by false wisdom ? which would be great folly, if ye should say, that these are brave notable men of talent, and seeing that they are men of integrity, they shall be well paid, in order to keep them so ; and then, suppose ye should give them five times more than was right, and so make them knaves in the outfit, in order to have them honest ever after ? what egregious folly would that be, to think of preventing the hand from holding of bribes, (or taking more than was right in their vocations) by setting them the example of taking more in the first outset ? and so of course, lead them to spend more, and want more still, and so never have enough, if they should be made idle, vain, and covetous, while they might think themselves quite the reverse, and only study to make their benefactors think so too ? and whether by such means, the officers of a state might not become a scandal thereunto ? even as the drunken tythe proctors and their ways, are not only a scandal to the church, but to the very name of a Christian, and to the nation, while those that employ them, cannot see, because they will not see, they care not, because they will not care, while they get their idol turn served, no matter how ; but woe be to that state, which should follow their example.

Such doings, might even disgrace the ages of heathen or pagan barbarity or despotism; but better days were designed for the believer in Christ, under the new covenant of his law written in the heart; and there is no doubt, the scripture prophecy had allusion to the outward and temporal order, as well as the heavenly life in the Zion of the Holy One of Israel, of which it is said, "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exalters righteousness: violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise;" of which it is also said, "thy God, thy glory;" but alas! alas! what glory is it that many have been seeking after, while they profess that glorious name? is it not such a glory as should be a shame to any people, (even a sinful glory,) and sin is a shame to any people? But it is righteousness that exalteth a nation; and have any of the rulers been given up to such strange delusions, as to suppose, that the great and expensive pomp and show, which causeth wasting and destruction, is for the glory and stability of a state, now, in this gospel day, and in a nation professing the reformed religion? is there any one evil, which could tend more to the downfall of a state, than height and prodigality in the rulers, if they should provoke the holiness and justice of the Lord, by the evil example of profuse wasting, and inventing many strange wants, like the old unbelieving world?

And if the heads of a nation, should (by their conduct,) set forth a profuse wasteful example, would not that tend to strengthen the hands of evil-doers, and embolden them in iniquity? surely then, the niggard, the sordid miser, the common money-monger of the world, together with the spendthrift and the common profligate, might say, (if so hardened in iniquity as to make the comparison,) “bad as we are, our rulers are still worse; for we only hoard up, or destroy, that which is our own, and ourselves with it, but they waste and destroy that which is got from others, and would corrupt the nation by their evil example of covetousness and prodigality, seeing that most like to copy after the great;” and thus the flood-gates of iniquity might be let loose, and the seeds of war sown, which cometh of men’s lusts; and is not covetousness a main branch of that lust, of which cometh wars, wasting and destruction? and would it not be grievous indeed, to see such evils excited by the very people who should have stood in the gap, and been on the Lord’s side, standing up for the cause of righteousness, right rule, and righteous order in the creation?

So sure as iniquity overspreads a land, swift destruction follows after, and though we may think the proud happy, and that such as make light of the Lord and of his fear, might be set up; and cannot see, how that swift destruction is at their heels, but may be saying (in the desperate blindness of the mind,) that such enjoy many

years of glory and tranquillity ; alas ! poor soul, dost thou not know, that the destruction is in no wise the less swift, but rather the more dreadful, yea, in as much as the score becomes great, so will the awakening be the more tremendous, whether it be unto a state of repentance through the adorable mercy of the Redeemer, (the larger the score, the more bitter the pang,) or whether, fearful to mention, there should be a going on and hating reproof, until given up to destruction from the presence of the Lord and from a sense of his goodness ; for just the same as with an individual or a people, so it is with states and nations, the broad way leadeth all to destruction ; and all that go therein, (out of the Lord's righteous circumscribing fear), they go in the way of Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, though they should be as high as rulers professing the faith of the everlasting Gospel.

Isaiah addresses his first chapter, to that high professing people, even to the rulers of Judah and Jerusalem, calling them rulers of Sodom, because they went in the like unrighteous course ; (and we read, that the iniquity of Sodom, was pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, &c.) he saith, “ hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom : give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah ; to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord ; ” and among their numerous crimes, he saith, “ their princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves ;

every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards ; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them ; therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies," read *Isaiah* i. and *Ezekiel* xvi. and *Hosea* mentions, in the catalogue of crimes among a people ready to be let alone and given over to idolatry, that, " their rulers with shame do love, GIVE YE ;" and if covetousness, wasting, and profligacy among rulers, was judged so exceedingly hateful and abominable, under the dispensation of the law, which made nothing perfect, why then should such a thing be even once named under the gospel, whereunto the better hope and better things are promised ?

And that such things were hateful and destructive, even amongst the Jews and people of Israel, may be seen throughout the scriptures, from the days of David, to the time of Herod ; which stand, as notable warnings to all ; but as I hasten to a conclusion, I may barely notice the case of Solomon, which should be a warning to all rulers, to beware of wallowing in too great abundance, lest they be lifted up thereby, so as to get full, and forget God, and to say by the manner of their life and conduct, " who is the Lord," even though they mean not so, yet it is possible for the conduct to speak such a language, if so be that the heart grow fat, thick, and gross, then they know not, nei-

ther love nor serve the living and true God, but the mind going into the earth, (over which they should have kept dominion in his love and power,) in the earthy mind they love and serve earthly things, which become indeed their gods, which the heart goes after, where the creature is served more than the creator, (who should be God over all), but, by going out of his heavenly order and dominion, they lose the true dominion over the earth, which gets dominion over such, and that is the root and ground of oppression; and it is also the grand root and ground of all idolatry; where the lords and gods many are served and worshipped; for where the heart is, may be called their heaven, and that which is loved most, is their god.

In the example of Solomon, we have a striking and instructive lesson, which if we could read, should it not warn us more than all his wisdom and proverbs? there we have a striking model of the weakness and instability of human nature; and how deceitful the heart of man is, that (while unchanged) it cannot be trusted, though never so dignified and highly favoured; proving at once, the indispensable necessity of a thorough change; as saith the blessed Redeemer, "ye must be born again"—was ever man or prince more favoured than Solomon? who was the son of David, and to whom the Lord appeared, to instruct and excite to virtue, and gave him wisdom and inspiration from above, beyond other men; admonish-

ing him also with precious promises and fearful threatenings ; and moreover, he was brought up under the admonition and care of his father David, whose rare example he had before his face ; and his ear heard the tender, yet faithful remonstrances of that father and man of God, who had pleaded with him on this wise ; “ and thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts ; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever : ” such was the manner of speech, in which he had been admonished by the sweet psalmist of Israel, who had been chastened for his own slipping, and loved the Lord’s judgments ; saith, “ the God of Israel said, the rock of Israel speak to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, &c.” (ii. *Sam.* xxiii. 3.) “ but the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, &c.” (*Verse* 6.)

And yet we may see, how that same Solomon, (who was so highly favoured,) suffered himself to be swallowed up by the abundance of wealth and splendour, that his mind became so befooled and darkened, as to fall away into the abominations of Egypt, Moab, and Ammon, and the surrounding Heathen ; so that the Lord’s anger and judgments were denounced against his adultery and idolatry, who also stirred up adversaries unto

him, so that vengeance seemed treading upon his heels ; yet there is great allowance to be made for Solomon, (I dont mean allowance for his crimes,) but for the great pitch of worldly splendour at which he arrived ; he being the man of peace, who was to build the temple made with hands, which was to surpass all the buildings in the world, in wisdom, glory and order ; being a figure of the temple made without hands, which Christ Jesus the heavenly prince of peace, would raise up, the fulness of whose grace, should surpass the glory and order of the temple at Jerusalem, as that surpassed all the buildings in the world ; and still more, for Solomon in all his glory, was not to be compared to the lilly in Christ's low valley ; while they that exalt themselves and reject his grace, are sure to fall as Solomon.

My object in bringing this case into view is, to shew by comparison, the great danger, may we not say, the sure vengeance and destruction, which rulers and people draw upon themselves, (and upon nations), by greedily coveting after the wealth, pomp, and glory of this world ; which, if Solomon, with all his wisdom, could not bear without being corrupted thereby, who will now say, that they can bear it better than him, who was under the peculiar care of Heaven, from whence he was warned of such temptations ? but he would not be forced, for that would be contrary to the unchangeable council of God, who calls for a free will, setting good and evil before

man, and his election is according to the choice, even unto his own seed, which brings light and conviction into the conscience, which can chuse life.

And seeing that Solomon could not bear that prosperity, which we cannot call ill-gotten wealth, which flowed in abundance, as by a miracle, yea, and for a great purpose, and under the care and protection of an approving God, who gave him wisdom and largeness of heart, to seek and serve him, and would have been found to his preservation, if he had not forsaken him; and therefore, seeing that he fell into strange vanities and evils, his case stands a warning to all who seek after the glory of this world, or trust therein for strength and stability, insomuch, that if men would not be warned by such a case as Solomon's, it might be said, that they would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Behold it in all its horrors, not only what befell himself, and how he sowed the seeds of rending the kingdom of Israel from his posterity; (and how far it tended to the rending from the kingdom of heaven, is only known by him that knoweth all things,) but we may also behold his crimes, as if written on the forehead, (setting forth a monster in nature,) for the ages of the world to read and be alarmed; yea, his own hand seems to write unto us as in the bitterness of remorse, as if he had felt the flame of divine wrath kindled against his revoltings; he saith, I hated life, because

the work wrought is grievous unto me : hear him exclaiming, “ all is vanity ; vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit,” yea, as if his wisdom had been turned into madness and folly ; it would seem as if he had even rushed into madness and folly, to try to amuse a guilty conscience, or allay the heat of that flame which his crimes had kindled, (but that could only add fuel to the fire ;) and what madness and folly could equal that ? he could tell by woeful experience, that, “ to the sinner God giveth travail ;” and winds up the conclusion of the whole matter, calling upon us to fear God and keep his commandments, who would bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.

And thus, amongst the clouds of ensamples, whose harms admonish us to beware there seems no case more signal than his ; whose crimes appear to be faithfully recorded, as a warning to both princes and subjects, to beware, that the heart be not stolen away by the abundance of this world's alluring baits, whereby the mind might be drawn away, to join in affection and affinity, with the many enticing abominations of the earth, more numerous, and as corrupt, as all his wives and concubines ; which is a striking figure of that which the spirit of this world leads into, when joined with, under the dominion of the mistress of Egypt, and of Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth, whose deceit, and the filthiness of her

fornication draws down into the pit, while she holds in her hand, a golden cup, all gilded and glittering with plausibility, though brim full of the filthiness of her fornication, to defile, stupify, and make all drunk who touch it with their lips; and it seems that Solomon had allusion to that woman, and to the wine of her cup; when he was awakened to a sense of the horrible effects thereof, he saith, “her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death; her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is as sharp as a two-edged sword; her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell, &c.” and of her cup he saith, “look not thou upon the wine when it is red, &c. at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder,” see (*Proverbs* ii. v. and vii. chapters.)

Which also agrees with what John saw coming upon many in the Christian world, as we read in the xvii. xviii. and xix. chapters of *Revelations*; concerning the dominion of Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots, (who sits upon the scarlet coloured beast;) “with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her; and they that partake of her sins, shall receive of her plagues, for her sins reached unto heaven, and God remembered her iniquities, and saith, reward her, even double unto her double according to her works; and how much she glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith

in her heart, I sit a Queen, and shall see no sorrow; therefore shall her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her; and the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail and lament, when they shall see the smoke of her burning; and the merchants, and shipmasters, who were made rich by reason of her costliness, shall weep and wail, saying, alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! they shall cry, (when they see the smoke of her burning; and all things which were dainty and goodly departed from her,) saying, how is so great riches come to nought;" but heaven, and the holy apostles, should rejoice, when God avenged them on her; who hath ears let them hear.

All sorcery and fornication, is of Mystery, Babylon, whether it be spiritual, or of the flesh; and that is a great mystery, for great is the mystery of iniquity; and those things, allude to the state of self security, in which the carnal Christian glories, while in full unity with the world, and decked with all the splendour, yea, even with all their religious ordinances, which, though it be a great mystery, yet see how simple it is, that even the babe, who will see, may see, that it is all, (whether within or without,) of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, for out of this great mistress of lust and pride, is

brought forth all that corrupteth the earth, and burthens the creation, and fills it with disorder violence and oppression, yea, both in the temporal and religious world, what monstrous births have been brought forth by that mistress of lust and pride; yea, and not only among kings and potentates of the earth, but even amongst patriarchs, popes, and prelates, of various professions, in the religious world so called?

Alas! how hath the mind been blinded by that earthly wisdom and influence, which (even while professing the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour,) hath corrupted people and multitudes and nations, from the simplicity which is in Christ? whose commandments should have been fulfilled in one word, even LOVE; yet through many hurtful lusts, which they that will be rich fall into, and even a lust after forbidden knowledge, and the pride of life, wherein men love to have the pre-eminence, more then they loved the Lord Jesus; what endless confusion hath been spread over Christendom, by the craft, subtlety, and intricacy of their many inventions, which they called christian faith? when carnally minded men took upon themselves to make faith for the people, which of course proved to be unbelief, seeing that they did not believe the scripture, which saith, that Jesus was the author and finisher of men's faith; but when men went about to make and finish faith and gospel ordinances, we may see how God confounded their wisdom, and made a shew of them openly before the face of all that chose

to open their eyes, who may see, how they have run into as strange whimsies, as ever were invented by the Heathen, and so, set up a main branch of idolatry, which became a snare, to churches, states, and nations.

Even as John foresaw, the whore sitting upon peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; and they cannot see how they dishonour Christ, by setting up as in the place of God, to be the authors of men's faith, and still worse, to father their monstrous opinions upon the revelation of the glorious Gospel of God our Saviour, while their very deeds prove them to be carnal men, and their wisdom of the serpent which beguiled Eve, that now beguiles from the simplicity which is in Christ; but that wisdom can never know the name, nor the number of the beast, and all that partake of the golden cup of Mystery, Babylon, are so stupified and bewitched thereby, that they cannot perceive those things, now that they are come to pass; although the Apostles foresaw, and forewarned us of every tittle thereof, long before they came to pass.*

* And even as respects temporals, how have people, multitudes, and nations, with the rulers, turned things up-side-down, perverting the right way of the Lord, in what they call the religious world? for while they say (as respects the Gospel) that the labourer is worthy of his reward; their reward has been, to make the Gospel as chargeable as ever they could; yea, even while they quote the Apostle, who saith in *i. Cor. ix. 18.* "what is my reward then? verily that, when I preach the Gospel, I may make the

And wherefore need we marvel, that men who went about to make up a faith and commandments for the world, should first reject the faith and command of Christ? which is, that we believe in, and fear God, and lay not up for ourselves treasures on earth: but the great whore had no regard for such as keep Christ's commandments; there is no such article in all her creed, though her mouth is smother than oil, saying, Lord, Lord, and Master, with a specious profession of Christ; yet she disdains all that would keep his commands, and that faith which Jesus is the author and finisher of, while she embraces in her bosom, such as first break his command, and seek to lay up for themselves treasures on earth, and such as are presumptuous, and go out of his fear, to devise ordinances, and make faith for others, and know not the faith which Jesus is the author and finisher of; that they pass over and make it to no effect; and in the room thereof, set up the commands of men; affecting to be wise above what is written, and so, made up the most subtile confused thing that ever appeared in the world, which

Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel;" could any language more decidedly assert, that to make the Gospel chargeable, would be to abuse his power therein, which no doubt was a heavenly power? but alas! how different hath it been with all the gain-sayers and wise men of Babylon, who are such strangers to the heavenly reward of the Gospel, that they look for an earthly reward? and how have the rulers built them up therein?

they call faith, though neither themselves nor any other can tell the meaning thereof; which yet they would have esteemed as jewels and ordinances of inestimable value, that so they themselves too, might be thought some great ones.

And thus rejecting the commands of God, they set up the tradition of men, whereby they scare the people, and cause them to err, and to break Christ's command, by fearing themselves, instead of fearing God and keeping his commandments; which is, to love and fear him, and lay not up for themselves treasures on earth; but this the great whore passeth over, because the love of God was never in her, nay, but she loves them most, who most break the Lord's command, and lay up the most treasure on earth, and without that, she regards none either in church or state.

And what if it should now be queried; whether there is not (even unto this day) as great abominations, and as corrupt idolatry to be found in England (under a specious profession of the Gospel), as was in Israel in the days of Solomon, when he served Ashtoreth and the abominations of the Heathen? for now, if the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, should be served and bowed unto by professed Christians, what will their profession of the glorious Gospel do for them, but add to their condemnation, if so be, that the throne of iniquity, and the chambers of imagery, should yet be standing, and principalties and powers joined together in church and

state, to the upholding of spiritual wickedness in their high places? for surely God will not be mocked, who is not as a man, to be put off with a specious semblance of reformation; for he sees all things just as they are, and will bring them into judgment, with every secret work.

And if Satan found the means of tripping up the heels of Solomon, and drawing away his heart, by means of that wealth, which was given as a blessing, under the favour of heaven, how fearful then, must be the state of him, who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that so he may be delivered from the power of evil? and if woe was proclaimed against them in the times of the law, what shall become of such as profess the Gospel, while they would set their nest on high, among the unclean birds? and not only take delight in that height and greatness procured by an evil covetousness; but even think it a preservation from evil, or a means to deliver from the calamities which overtake and overturn states and nations?

But if that eye would, or could be opened, which the god of this world blindeth, then they might see, that they themselves, with their pomp and state, and the iniquity set up in a nation through the influence of such example, is one great cause of that evil which they fear; yea, even of the Lord's judgments, which sometimes seem ready to break forth upon a nation or people;

but which the unbeliever goes about to account for, as men do the fate of their battles, who attribute the success thereof to their own wisdom, or to the feats of some of their heroes, and so make little account, to blaspheme (in effect) the providence of God, which alone permits, upholds, and orders all things; and is he not an infidel indeed, (though a high professing Christian,) who cannot see, that the Lord loves righteousness and hates iniquity; who over-rules all, and will in no wise let the guilty go unpunished, except they repent and amend their ways and their doings? and are they not unbelievers, and like the Heathen, who imagine, that honour and dignity, should any ways consist in pomp and show, which must be supported by destructive expense?

I am aware that most would call such reasoning, the fruit of wild ignorance, which knows nothing of the greatness and the pomp needful for rulers to maintain, in order to command respect and authority, and appear great and liberal?*

* It would be too tedious to answer the great outcry, and many objections, that some would make against what they would call the novelty of this sort of reasoning, as being subversive of any idea of liberality; I may only remind such, (though I know that I cannot convince them,) that true greatness and liberality is one thing, and prodigality quite another, yea, so different, that while liberality may be called a real virtue, so far may wasting and prodigality be called a vice, just as we might say (by way of comparison), that, although industry is a virtue, yet if a man work himself to death, knowing that his over-exertion might have such effect; should not that be considered a crime, bordering on suicide?

Answer—although I have little, or no knowledge of such affairs, yet I have a mind, and can at times feel, and bewail the great folly which yet abounds in the world, and especially amongst some of the higher orders; and may tell him that would plead for expensive pomp, (as being needful to command respect,) that such wisdom is from beneath, in the council of the deceiver, more subtle than all the beasts of the field; and do not such say in effect, (even while they deny it in word,) that now, although our profession be Christian, yet the practice of our rulers must be Heathen, in order to command respect and authority? and let me ask such a one again, whether it is not rather, a little foolish base mind, that ever thought he should be the more respected, for being clogged and cumbered with a deal of ill-gotten painted dirt? who does he think would regard him on such account? surely none, except fools or knaves, for in the sight of all the honest and the wise, it is righteousness which exalteth a nation, and that is it, which would also exalt its rulers, establish their authority, and make them truly honourable? and it is that alone, which can give a well grounded hope of the favour of God, and procure that honour or submission from men, which is due to rulers.

And seeing the time that now is, it is high time to awake out of sleep; and ye that profess Christ, if ye know his day to be at hand, and if ye believe in his light, which is near; bring your deeds there-

unto, that so ye may see, whether they be such as please God, or whether they please him not, which is of more importance to you, than thrones or sceptres, that soon pass away? God hath given to every one, a measure of his light, which comes by Jesus Christ, which, if ye hate, it will be your condemnation, for it is the condemnation of all who love darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil; but he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be reprov'd and made manifest, whether they are wrought in God; and this is the Gospel message, that light is come into the world, and that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Behold then the great message of glad tidings, which concerns all mankind: and if the rulers take heed thereto, that is what would make them honourable, as the Lord saith, "if any man serve me, him will my Father honour;" and no man can serve him, while he rejects and slights his light and grace, which comes by him, to teach all, "to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (*Titus* ii.) That is the witness for God in the conscience, which is truth, and cannot lie nor flatter any: oh! that the rulers would

bring their deeds unto it, which would not deceive you; if ye deal fairly with your own souls, it would speak the truth and no lie; and would shew what is yet a lacking (for it is light) and would shew, whether there is not, (even to this day,) many things, which ought not to be once named amongst the rulers of a peculiar people, zealous of good works? and whether there is not yet, some of the old heathen leaven, which would still strive to bear rule, by means somewhat like the old pagan pomp and grandeur? even like the princes of the unbelievers, whom the Lord said his followers should not be like? and whether there is not still, a great want of faith, in the purity, simplicity, efficacy, and stability, in a word, the glory, which the wisdom of God would establish in the councils of his redeemed people, if they were disposed to be ordered by his wisdom, in all godly sincerity and honesty?

Some may object and say, that I don't appear sensible of what a favour it is, to live under our valuable constitution.

Answer—I have said already, that, little as I know, I esteem it a favour to live under such a government, which, compared with others that I have heard of, I don't know of any like it in many respects; so that I wish well to it with all my heart, and that what is amiss may be set right; howbeit, I attribute, the well ordering, to the mercy of God, rather than to man; and I earnestly desire, that our rulers, who have so great and

arduous a weight upon them, may be favoured with wisdom from God, and a heart to search thoroughly, and see, whether there be any accursed thing concealed amongst them, which is a cause of great heaviness, and of divine displeasure? I say concealed, because the eye hath been closed which could see it; so that the back is bowed down unto this day, even by the weight of that thing, which Satan hath bound upon the daughter of professing Israel, these many years: so that if ever ye come to be loosed from that great infirmity, it must be, by the mighty power of Him, who is Lord of the Sabbath day, unto whose people there remaineth rest and peace: but then, if ye would be his people indeed and in truth, children that will not lie, of whom he would be the Saviour, ye must know him that would cast out that evil spirit, and spoil your hypocritical rest; can ye and your chief-priests bear him to heal on your Sabbath day? will it offend you, to have your false rest disturbed, even the rest that ye would take as in a defiled bed, which will prove too short, and the covering too narrow, being at best, but of the works of that law which is under the curse?

But beware that ye be not offended in Him, that is the way, the truth, and the life, who alone can lay the axe to the root of the corrupt tree; but shall I say, for my part, the message is unto you, in the fear and dread of the Lord, the God of heaven and the whole earth; that if ye would

receive him in the way of his coming, ye must bring forth fruits meet for repentance ; and if ever ye come to know Christ to reign amongst you in righteousness, and to decree justice and judgment through you, ye must first be willing to loose some heavy burthens, even in the outward mammon, which is even grievous for yourselves to bear, and which is (to some of you) as the riches of unrighteousness ; because that ye have been taking too much, and giving too much, and spending too much, and appearing too great and too wanton upon the earth ; so that the Lord is weary with forbearing, and will not always bear your pomp ; and seeing that he hath done more for you than for other nations, shall he not therefore, require the more at your hands ? even that ye should be a kind of first fruits, of that righteous order and government which he would have set up in the nations that will receive it ; and oh ! that ye may not thrust it away from you, and so prove yourselves unworthy of his mercies !

And this know, that if ye serve Him, ye cannot please yourselves in the first place, but must be willing, even in that sense, to leave your great enormous customary receipts, which now, with some of you, seems like a gift that blindeth the mind and perverteth judgment ; but if (on the other hand,) ye seek the Lord for true greatness of soul, to lay them down as a free will offering, at his footstool, methinks that I see in his light, that it would be, even yet, (at this late hour,) an

acceptable sacrifice of a sweet savour ; and that then, light would spring up amongst you, yea, even a measure of that light, in which all the nations of them that are saved must walk ; and if ye did believe and walk therein, and do the truth, it would reprove all your evil deeds, and give power over them, for the light of Christ is the light of life, by which ye might become children of the light, and of his day.

And they that thus serve the Lord he would honour, yea, and if the rulers did so honour him, he would exalt even the outward law (or order of the creation,) and make it honourable in their hands, and so they should know, (if they follow on to know the Lord,) that it is “the righteous which hold on their way, and men of clean hands grow stronger and stronger ;” and ye should see, (if the eye be opened,) that the thing which ye thought highly esteemed, is an abomination, and that which ye thought needful, for the health, strength, and honour of the state, is a very cause of sickness, weakness, and disgrace thereunto, and a cause of great drudgery unto rulers, yea, even worse and harder to bear, than the whole responsibility of their administration, (if I should be allowed to speak plainly,) I mean the general course of life and manners, which hath been gendered by the acquisition of over much wealth ; and become so familiar with use, and so established by vain custom, as now to be thought, not only honourable, but even indispensable, which if they

could see and feel as it really is, would rather appear like dragging along, an old dead filthy carcass, (crawling with worms,) which though chained to them by custom, yet nevertheless, need a large portion of depravity, to give a relish for such an evil savour, which, to a clean, sound, healthy mind, which the Lord cleanseth, would appear neither graceful, grateful, nor healthful, nay, but disgraceful, nauseous, and pitiful.

Oh, England ! England ! and the nations thereof, what will become of many great ones of the higher orders, if they still go on, seeking out wealth and many inventions to consume it upon their ungodly lusts ? oh ! the many imaginary wants, and the abomination of their evil example in the world ! what great skill is displayed, to waste precious time, and destroy the good creatures of God, as the various debaucheries of their private and public amusements may bear witness ? all of which, being performed so seemingly graceful, and dressed up with such deceit and dissimulation, as might lead one to conclude, that the whole mask was wrought by Satan's own finger, being throughout, quite of a piece, with their theatres, revels, games, toasts and sports ; grown so common and familiar, that many may almost forget whether such things exist at all, and others again, seem to think that they could not live without them, while thousands of the poor are at their wits' end to sustain life.

That is the nation, (favoured above others,) of which it may be said, what could the Lord have done for a nation, which he hath not done in it? and will he not look into it for fruits of righteousness, seeing that it is a nation, which can boast of being enlightened beyond others? Well, yea, thrice happy had they been, did they but believe and walk in the light, as many amongst them have done, (who were as the salt of the earth,) then should the Lord have taken delight in these nations, and they should have been the glory of the world; so that we had need to beware, and remember the lamentation over a people favoured in like manner, of whom it was said, “the crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned;” and again, “woe is me for my hurt, my wound is grievous;” when the Prophet saw how the Lord would sling out the inhabitants of the land; (*Jer. x. Lament. v*)

Which, that it may never be wholly applicable to these favoured nations, or the rulers, my soul and spirit craves; but that they may be so aroused to fear the Lord, as to apply their hearts to wisdom, even to the light of Christ, (which is the wisdom and power of God,) that would show many of them, how very far they are from walking in acceptance before the Lord of Hosts, who is able to change their glory as in a moment, and roll it up as a scroll is rolled together; oh, that they would fear him indeed! who is able to blow

away all the deceitful works with one blast of breath.*

It was said of Israel, whom the Lord nourished and brought up, (and drove out the heathen from before them,) “ I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me : the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider ;” to whom he calls, saying, “ Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters ; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger. (*Isaiah* i.)

And now, will his favoured nation, at this day consider, and know the Lord, and serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind ? alas ! woe is me, because that for many amongst them, (and even some of the rulers) it looks as if there is no

* We may perceive, even in our own time, a most signal display of the Lord’s over-ruling power in the kingdoms of this world—only look at the late convulsion in France ; behold that nation, standing almost alone, and even making head, against the power, interest, and policy, of the combined forces, of Emperors, Kings, Princes, States, Popes, Priests and Prelates, &c. and on the other hand, see them again, (after having vanquished them all,) assaying to march furiously through the world ; with Emperors, Kings, Princes, States, Priests and Prelates, all on their side, when their mighty legions were hurled down, with all their train of armies and allies :—some might say that there was a cause for such changes ; and so there was, yea, and a very different cause too, from that which the infidel would assign, yea, verily, there was a cause, which was according to his permission, without which, even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground.

hope; yea, alas, for three reasons, there is little, little hope, and because of a fourth, the wound appears incurable.

Because that many of the customs of the people are vain, and as some in old time, chose their own ways, which were not good, neither walked they in the way of the Lord, but a deceitful heart caused them to err: so that the Lord removed them from being rulers, and by his power brought in others in their room; who nevertheless, have gone after many of their liberties, to serve the lust of the flesh, which the Lord abhors. And now secondly, because it is the custom, and the heart goes after it, the people will not consider, but hold up the same thing still, as if they conceived, that custom and old usage should consecrate or sanctify corruption; they uphold an old custom (because they like it,) until it would throw themselves down into the pit, because of which the heart becomes gross, the ear heavy, and the eye closed from seeing; because of which, they know not to walk in the light of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hand, so as thoroughly to amend their ways and their doings.

And also for this, there is little hope, even because of the corrupt lawyers, who are still what the Lord said they were, even such as take away the key of knowledge, yea, such as would not only take away and confuse the knowledge of God, but even take away the key of all sound rational common sense, which was clear and simple,

until they made it intricate, and confused, muddy, and corrupt; and many of them show by their ways, that they have not a good conscience toward God and man, inasmuch as with all their skill and craft, they labour to make right appear wrong, and wrong, right; to put truth for falsehood, and lies for truth; and he who appears the greatest work-master in that horrible science, of perverting the truth, and turning of things upside down, is considered greatest, and thus the most vile person is thought most honourable.

But above all, that which makes the wound appear incurable, is the evil influence of the covetous priests, that can never have enough; who destroy the people, and by their example embolden them in iniquity, even by beholding amongst some of them and their families, as many imaginary wants, and as great propensity to live deliciously, as ever appeared among the heathen; while at the same time, they profess to be denying themselves, taking up their cross, and learning of a meek and lowly Saviour; and the people think so too, unto whom they cry, peace, so long as they put into their mouths, (when yet there is no peace) while they heal the hurt of the people slightly, and cast stumbling-blocks before them, and eat that which is sacrificed to their idol, for the glory of the world, and the wisdom thereof, that is their idol; and by their example, the people are emboldened to partake of that which is sacrificed thereunto, even to the god of this world, whereby the conscience of

the weak is defiled, and the Lord dishonoured, even by serving other gods and glorying therein, which is fornication spiritually ; the love not being chaste and pure unto the Lord, because they know him not, neither will they consider.

Therefore, is there not now, full as great cause of mourning, as when the Lord proclaimed the command “ to consider, and call for the mourning women, to teach their daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation ;” because of what came to pass, when (through deceit) the people refused to know the Lord, neither obeyed his voice, who saith, “ let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth ; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord ;” who saith, that he would punish all the house of Israel, which (while professing the circumcision), were uncircumcised in heart. (See *Jerem. ix*)

And how can they understand or know the Lord, who regard not his law, but glory in their wisdom and in their riches ? Is not that a man’s god in which he glorieth, (whatsoever it may be,) while a mere empty profession is but hypocrisy ? And God will one day make the hypocrite to tremble, (in a sense of judgment to come,) who knoweth not the Lord’s righteousness and tempe-

rance, but having on a righteousness and temperance of their own, while the eye and expectation is after money, like Felix, and like him, the money-monger would still put by the reprover, (at best) saying, go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee; so saith the wordling, who would not have his convenience disturbed, and so, would never find it convenient to submit unto the righteousness and temperance which is of God. Oh! that such would tremble indeed, so as to witness redemption before it be too late, that so they may not come before the judgment, where the gulf is fixed, and no passing from thence; but that their sins may be opened before them, going beforehand unto the judgment of him, who for judgment came into the world, that the blind may see, and that the eye which sees glory in vanity and lies, may be made blind.

That even thus, oh Lord God Almighty! the prince of this world may be judged, by thy power, who hath all power in heaven and earth, that so the god of this world, which blindeth the mind, may be judged, and that the deceiver, the wolf in the sheep's clothing, (who is inwardly ravenous after gain,) may be seen and stripped of his false covering, and of all the deceivableness of unrighteousness; yea, even change him, oh thou Lamb immaculate! if he may be changed, that so the wolf may yet lie down with the lamb, and that such as have been like the leopard, even

spotted all over with sin, may be made meet to lie down with thy kids, being changed by thy all renovating power, oh Lord Almighty! by which the world was made, who hath power over death and hell; oh! limit the power thereof, which comes by sin, and cast down the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, that they may not always deceive the nations, but that the glory, the wisdom, and the pomp of Mystery, Babylon, with all her filthiness of flesh and spirit, may be (as a great mill-stone) cast into the sea; that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; oh! thus yet reign, for Thou only art worthy, worthy, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light, unto whom be all honour and glory and power everlasting; Amen.

CONCLUSION.

And now, having (according to the ability given me,) written something of that which hath turned upon my mind at times for years past; I shall conclude with a few lines of the third and fourth Chapters of Micah, speaking on this wise:—

“ Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house
 “ of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel,
 “ that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.
 “ They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem
 “ with iniquity,— The heads thereof judge for
 “ reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire,
 “ and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet
 “ will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not
 “ the Lord among us? none evil can come upon
 “ us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be
 “ ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become
 “ heaps, and the mountain of the house as the
 “ high places of the forest.

“ But in the last days it shall come to pass,
 “ that the mountain of the house of the Lord
 “ shall be established in the top of the mountains;
 “ and it shall be exalted above the hills, and
 “ people shall flow unto it.—And many nations
 “ shall come, and say, come, and let us go up to
 “ the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of
 “ the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his

“ ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the
 “ law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the
 “ Lord from Jerusalem.—And he shall judge
 “ among many people, and rebuke strong nations
 “ afar off; and they shall beat their swords into
 “ ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-
 “ hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against
 “ nation, neither shall they learn war any more.—
 “ But they shall sit every man under his vine and
 “ under his fig tree; and none shall make them
 “ afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts
 “ hath spoken it.”

THE END.

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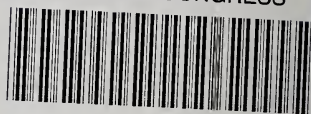
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